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Mackay

Cow range and

hunting trail (36)

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Quick Shooting Saves Our Lives  
Drawn by Charles M. Russell

COW RANGE  
AND  
HUNTING TRAIL

BY  
MALCOLM S. MACKAY

*WITH 38 ILLUSTRATIONS*

G.P. Putnam's Sons  
New York & London  
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by  
Malcolm S. Mackay



Made in the United States of America

"Let him who loves his ease  
    sit close and house him fair,  
But he'll still be a stranger  
    to the merry thrill of danger—  
And the joy of the open air."



## FOREWORD

To *Bud, Bill, Pete* and *Mary-Ellen* and all the rest of God's children, big and little, who love the big open places of this sunlit world.

THE Great Creator never made two things of any nature exactly alike; therefore should you read every book ever written about our Western pioneer life, you would not know just how it looked to your own Dad. Two men may have lived in, and written of the same country, but if they told the truth straight out from their hearts, as I have tried to do, their mental pictures would vary considerably, and each would record facts totally different from the other.

While still in my teens I first went West in the late nineties, filled only with the desire to see the great cattle country, to get into the cattle business, to become a rider of the boundless plains. A few years later, it thrilled me to follow the trail of big game into the fastnesses of the great mountain ranges. During those years of strenuous activity the thought never occurred to me that some day I might think it worth while to write down for my own children and

all the others who love the great big open West, the impressions that life was recording on my memory—so I never kept a diary, and I am not able to recall in detail the interesting stories, the picturesque language, the absolutely unique slang of the cow range—but I hope these pictures will give you some idea of that wild, free life.

I wish you all could have slept with us in our little log cow-camp on Willow Creek, and been awakened each morning by the sweet song of the Meadowlark, and peering out through the window seen "Old Capt" peacefully munching grass at the end of a picket rope. Dear "Old Capt," our picket pony, how we loved him, in spite of the "crow-hopping" he'd do on a frosty morning while bringing in the saddle bunch.

I wish you could have sat with us of an evening at our cabin door and listened to the love call of the Curlew, circling overhead, and heard the thrilling note of the Nighthawk and the lonesome howl of the Coyote and the Wolf.

I wish that on some frosty fall day, you had risen with us at daybreak, breakfasted on oatmeal, fried spuds, eggs and coffee, put your saddle on "Coyote," "Fox," "Baldy," or "Crocket" and loped with us down the bench to meet the rising sun—and with it the day's work among the cattle.

I wish all this could have been, for then you would have felt the thrill and glory of it all—for it is really only that which we have felt that we truly remember. But painted in rough, broad strokes, I have pictured those happy days. It is a different picture from what others have painted—different scenes, different human souls met. Every word I have written is true. Living that life gave me a great amount of happiness and hardihood, a great love for the open places, and the folks I met there. And if the reading of these pages should do no more than widen your conception of the cattle country, and enhance your respect for the folks that “fought it through,” I shall not have written in vain.

DAD.

W Rancho, Montana,

July, 1925.

The author wishes to thank the editors of *Outdoor Life* and *Field and Stream* for their courtesy in allowing him to publish the two stories in this book which appeared in their magazines.





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## Cow Range and Hunting Trail



# Cow Range and Hunting Trail

## I

### MY FIRST ADVENTURE INTO COWBOY COUNTRY

WHEN I was nineteen years old, I was working in a banking house in New York, but somehow it in no way satisfied the hunger for real action and adventure that surged within me. So, when my vacation came due in September, on the recommendation of a friend of mine, I decided to go out to Mandan, North Dakota, and shoot and ride with a cowboy by the name of Charley Thursten.

I pulled into Mandan some time about eleven at night. It was cold and dark, but after hunting around a bit, Charley and I finally met.

Charley was a real "he-man." He stood about five feet ten, with his boots on, erect and forceful. His face was clean cut and strong, scarred with many years of living in the open, and from standing much "punishment and grief," as the cowboys

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say. His character was like his physique—efficient, bold and positive.

He was at this time running a bunch of horses on the hills north of Mandan, and was camping in a tent at the edge of the town.

We had gone about a block from the station when we saw a crowd looking in the door of a one-story shack and found out that there had just been a shooting affray, with the result that a dead man was laid out on a table. We looked in at his blood-spattered face, thought for a moment of the tragedy of some men's lives, and continued on our way to Charley's camp.

Charley's camp was crude, containing nothing but what an out-door man really needed—just a cowboy tarp bed in an old tent; a few cooking utensils and a little chuck. He and I doubled up in the bed and were soon asleep.

Next morning we rose at dawn, got a bite to eat, saddled up a couple of ponies, and loped out to the hills to catch some better riding stock, on which we were to make our trip to the Sioux Reservation.

When we found the horse herd, I was surprised to hear Charley say that he intended to rope the horse he wanted for me on foot.

He showed me the pony he wanted, and taking his rope and slipping off his pony, told me to lead

## Adventure into Cowboy Country 5

his horse as near as possible to the horse he intended roping. In the meantime, he had his rope "all set" and was sneaking along at his horse's side. When he was sure he was near enough, he quickly stepped out from behind his horse, and with a deft overhand throw, settled the noose squarely over the horse's head. The pony lunged and bucked around, but Charley, with the rope around his hips and heels in the ground, held him until he gave in.

We put my saddle on the new pony and started back towards Mandan. It was a breezy day and the range grass was very dry. Charley rolled a cigarette, smoked it a few minutes, and tossed it away. All of a sudden, I saw him turn his pony, and, looking back I saw the prairie was afire. To set a prairie fire was serious business. Charley was at it like a raging bear. I came up and joined in, and in about fifteen minutes we had it out. Charley was sure worried over it, and swore he'd throw no more lighted cigarette butts away.

That night we camped again on the outskirts of Mandan and next morning hit south for the Sioux Agency and Cannon Ball Ranch.

We figured on staying out about two weeks hunting chickens and ducks, seeing the ranch country and the Sioux Indian Reservation. We each had a shotgun along, and I had a small camera.

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The first night we camped at a small ranch about twenty-five miles south of Mandan. Charley knew these people, and they gave us a very cordial welcome. Toward evening several cowboys came loping in and they amused themselves with roping stunts and pulling tug-of-war on horseback.

Next morning, after a hearty breakfast of pancakes, ham and eggs and coffee, we thanked these kind people for their hospitality and pulled out for the Standing Rock Agency.

It was a hard, dusty, windy ride and I, for one, was mighty glad when the Agency store hove in sight. We stopped to see the agent for a few minutes and he told us where to put our ponies, and later on ourselves.

He also said he would be glad to have us eat supper and breakfast with him. He was a hard-boiled type of western adventurer and knew well the seamy side of the early west.

After supper, he drew his chair up to the old stove, lit his pipe and for several hours told stories and yarns about notable Indians and white men who had made history on the frontier. I remember the Indians were just getting over a bad dose of small-pox and we had to cross the little Missouri on a cable ferry with two or three families of them, which we did not fancy very much.

## Adventure in Cowboy Country 7

We rode on down to the Cannon Ball Ranch situated on the Cannon Ball River, so called because of the occurrence of so many round sandstones shaped just like large cannon balls, which lay all about the ranch.

This was quite a large cattle and horse ranch, comprising a fine headquarters ranch house and several nice, large guest cabins, made of logs—all whitewashed and neat, each containing two large double beds, with washstands to match. We were honored with one of these cabins, and put in a fine, comfortable night.

I was much interested next morning when I saw the horse-wrangler come loping in with about 150 head of broncs. These he corralled, and then, saddling one after the other, he had the gate opened and away he would go, bucking and jumping, out on the prairie. Sometimes he came back in a few minutes. Other times it took him much longer to conquer his horse. He was a tall, lanky fellow, full of humor, and a real horse tamer. He sure enjoyed himself! The more they pitched, the more he yelled. This he did day in and day out.

That afternoon we left the Cannon Ball Ranch and went over to a lake to get some duck shooting. This lake was about three-quarters of a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide. Charley showed me where



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to sit on a grassy point, and then he rode around the lake, throwing his rope into the water and keeping the ducks moving. The place was alive with ducks and snipe, and in a half hour I had a good bag, so we quit.

We were about three miles from a little settlement, so we rode there and distributed the ducks to everybody in town. We camped all night in a barn, and next day rode out into the prairie country to the Northwest, making a big circle toward Mandan. Each day we would shoot a few prairie chickens and a few ducks, then look for some cabin or ranch and camp there for the night, getting a little nearer Mandan each day. It was a wonderful trip for me. I had a ride of some 250 miles, saw a lot of ranch and Indian life, had some wonderful chicken and duck shooting, and came home hard as nails, and more enthusiastic than ever with God's life in the open.



Our Old Cow Camp on Willow Creek



## II

### I GO TO RED LODGE, MONTANA

IN 1899 my friend, George B. Hoffman, who had worked with me at Vermilye & Co., New York, prior to the Spanish War, was down in Arizona, after serving with the Rough Riders, who had been demobilized there.

On the advice of another friend, Raleigh Evans, who had just come back from a summer at Red Lodge, Montana, I decided to pull out for that town, and George wanted to come up and ride the range with me. So in June, 1901, I met George at Red Lodge.

George Hoffman was a fine fellow to bunk with. He was fine looking, well built, always smiling, always interesting, and interested in everything. He was dead medicine with the ladies, old and young. Blondes and brunettes all fell for him, but it did them no good, for he was engaged to a girl at Buffalo, Wyoming, and kept a tight tally on his heart strings.

George hadn't much money, and I did not have a whole lot, but ranch sites did not come high in

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those days, and cattle were quite cheap. We stayed at the Pollard Hotel a few days, and talked to various people about the country, ranchmen and things in general.

I remember just at this time there was much doing in the line of bank robberies, horse stealing and other crimes and the very first week we were in Red Lodge, three men bit the dust as the result of a conflict with the sheriff and his deputies.

Of course, this all added a zest and charm to things for us, for we were full of longing for real adventure in any of the many western molds.

After looking at various ranches on Red Lodge Creek, none of which we cared particularly about, we thought of the letter that Raleigh Evans had given us to his friend, Charley Wright.

Charley Wright was originally from Pennsylvania, had come west in the early eighties, had ridden with several of the big cow outfits in the south central part of Montana, and now was County Treasurer and also ran cattle of his own between the East and West Rosebuds, thirty miles to the west of Red Lodge.

It just happened that he was compelled to give the County Treasury job a lot more of his time than he figured on, and so had to neglect his herd on the Rosebud. So, it just suited him to have us

## I Go to Red Lodge, Montana 11

come along, put in a little money, and all our time, to look after the H.F. cattle.

He had squatted on what was then known as Willow Creek, a little stream lying between the East and West Rosebud Rivers. He had built a little two-room cabin, near a good spring and also had several log barns. We moved here and took possession.

He had about a dozen good cow ponies at the Camp, mostly old Crown outfit horses. There were Coyote, Prince, Baldy, Crockett, Captain and others I forget. He was running about four or five hundred head of stock cattle of the grade Hereford stock. These ranged about the hills in a radius of perhaps twenty miles.

Our job was to ride a line more or less defined and not let them drift beyond it. We also aimed to keep the calves branded up, help other outfits nearby brand, represent the H.F. outfit when other outfits were working cattle, and see that none of our stock was driven off the range.

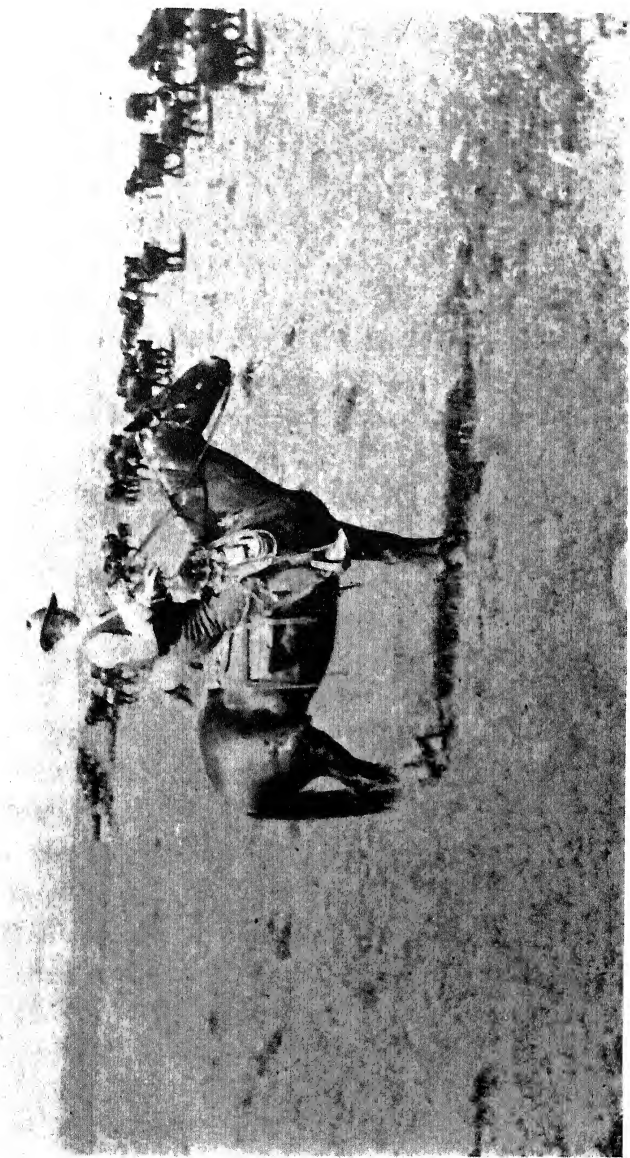
Charley Wright was a wonderful man to be associated with. He was then about thirty-nine years old; stood about five feet seven, erect and lithe as an Indian; brave, quick, a fearless rider, a good roper, a born optimist, and always a radiator of enthusiasm and life. He came out at round-up times, captained the round-up work and helped drive to

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the railroad. Between times he would come out quite often, bringing our mail and a little more food. He was the only man I really ever met, who had the three o'clock A.M. courage. Day after day, I saw him leave his blankets at three-thirty A.M. and spring into his day's work (in all kinds of weather) with all the joy and happy anticipation of a boy of sixteen for an afternoon's swim. And yet, when his anger was aroused, he was not a man to fool with. His grey blue eyes would shine and blaze with loosened flames of wrath. At these times he was as quick as a cat, and few men dared to draw a gun on him. But these occasions were few, and Charley Wright is always remembered in our country as one who radiated life, enthusiasm, good will and joy.

We had been in partnership with him for about a year and a half, when he decided to get married and start a thoroughbred Hereford ranch near Red Lodge. He sold out his buildings and rights on Willow Creek to me and finally just as he had built up his thoroughbreds to a fine paying basis, the Lord must have needed him to ride the starry ranges, for with a bolt of lightning, his life on this world was ended.

When Charley left me, he kept the H.F. brand and I wrote to the State brand recorder and got the Lazy EL as my brand.



Charles E. Wright on "Fox" Driving Them In





### III

#### HOFFMAN AND I RIDE THROUGH YELLOWSTONE PARK WITH A PACK OUTFIT

IN July, 1902, after the calves had been branded, and while the hay was still too young to cut, George and I decided to ride over the mountain range to the west of us and so on around to the Yellowstone. George rode Coyote and I was on Prince. We had our grub on old "Captain," and our beds on "Baldy."

On the top of the grub pack I remember we had a frying pan or two tied, and also the coffee pot in true old-time trapper's style. We stopped somewhere near the head of Fishtail Creek the first afternoon out, to shoot some grouse for supper; and when old Captain heard the roar of the guns, away he went,—bucking and jumping as hard as he could. He sure scattered our cooking utensils, "hell west and crooked"—as the cowboys say.

We were told that we should camp the first night at Nye City, which was not far from the foot of the Lodge Pole trail. We rode and rode, and looked and

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looked for the big city, and finally getting a bit doubtful as to our direction, spied a ranch house about a half mile to the north and rode up there to inquire.

"Beg pardon, ma'am, but we are hunting for Nye City," I said. "Can you tell us just where we will find it?"

The old lady smiled and said: "You'll never get any nearer to it than you are right now." We were right in the heart of the City of Nye, and didn't know it.

They were kind folk, and asked us to eat supper with them. I will never forget that supper! I always thought of it as the "battle of flies." I've seen and heard quite a lot of flies in my time, but there at Nye, we either had to bow and surrender, which we were too hungry to do, or "eat 'em alive" which we did do. We didn't have a chance. They were on hand by the thousands. You simply could not brush them off the food and get the food into your mouth without their peacefully riding along in.

That night we slept in a shed, and next day pulled out to find Lodge Pole Trail—the trail that led up over the divide between the Stillwater and Yellowstone Rivers. All we knew about the trail was the general direction it was supposed to be, and as there did not seem to be anybody within forty miles of us to ask,

we simply had to take a chance. Well, we picked up a trail that seemed to be headed in the right direction, and followed it until about three in the afternoon, when it ended absolutely at an old sawmill camp. We were two disgusted adventurers, but we turned about and back-tracked down the mountain again and finally ran into a little mountain ranch run by a short red-headed fellow by the name of Oliver. He was a good fellow and made us camp with him for the night, which we were mighty glad to do, for we were pretty tired. We ate with him, slept in his bunk house, and next day he showed us definitely just where the real Lodge Pole Trail was.

Going over the Lodge Pole Trail was quite an adventure for us. I guess it was the first real mountain trail we had ever been over, and it was quite long, about thirty miles of it. We saw lots of game sign and several bands of deer jumping away from the game licks. There was sign of bear (black and grizzly), elk, deer, wolves and coyotes. We had to camp on the westerly slope of the mountain that night, and next day made it on down the Boulder to the Yellowstone. It took us three days more before we pulled into the Fort at Mammoth Hot Springs.

George had a letter to the commander there, and he very graciously suggested that we leave our two pack horses at the Fort, and he would give us a

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permit to stop at any of the soldier stations scattered throughout the Park. This really helped a lot; for we could now move fast and did not have to bother packing and making camp, etc. We were each mounted on fine cow ponies, and we did have a delightful ride all through that wonderful country. The soldiers at all the stations were most hospitable and gave us the very best they had.

I remember one eating place, captained by that famous old timer, Larry Mathews, who when we arrived a bit late for supper, welcomed us in and then introduced us to all, by bellowing out loud, "Two more good-looking gentlemen for dinner!" He was a good-hearted old timer, and everybody enjoyed Larry.

I remember being much impressed by a meat house they had at one of the soldier stations, which was built of the heaviest logs obtainable, and the door was just a solid mass of spikes, driven from the inside out. This was necessary to keep the grizzlies from tearing it down, and cleaning up all the meat. We visited every paint pot, geyser and spring in the park, and also the Lake and the Grand Canyon, and it was truly a trip of wonder and delight to us both. We rode on back to Mammoth, paid our respects to the commander, and in four days of easy riding were back again at our home Camp.

## IV

### I MEET OLD UNCLE BILLY HAMILTON—GOVERNMENT SCOUT, HUNTER, SIGN TALKER AND TRAPPER

ONE morning in the early spring I was riding the range, up the westerly slopes of the East Rosebud River, when I heard somebody holler from the other side, near the bunk house of the "DK"—Dan Kaufman Ranch.

I was not in any hurry, so I forded the river and rode up to where the noise came from, and soon saw a little old man, with the face of an Indian, standing by the river bank whittling out a slab to stretch a beaver hide on.

"I'm just fixing to have some beaver tail for dinner; thought you might like to try some," he said in a strong, staccato voice.

I had heard a lot about "old Uncle Billy," as they called him, and I was more than happy to have run into him. Right away we both felt that we were going to be good friends. We both loved the same

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things, followed the same trails, spoke the same language. Old Uncle Billy was one of the last of the real old time mountain men who went west before there were any trails—who trapped and traded with the Indians, hunted and explored the great West, from the Mexican line to the Canadian border. Later on they acted as scouts for Uncle Sam's Cavalry on the plains, and Uncle Billy used to sit in his little cabin at the U2 Ranch and talk to me by the hour of his experiences acting as scout in the campaigns of "Miles" and "Terry" against the Indians—people who knew said Uncle Billy had killed more Indians than Buffalo Bill ever saw.

When I met Uncle Billy he was just about eighty and he was still trapping beaver by himself using one saddle horse and two pack ponies. He would be away trapping the headwaters of Red Lodge, Butcher, Rosebuds and Fiddler Creeks for as long as two months at a time.

He said to me once: "You know, Mack, that you are looking at the most independent man on God's green earth." I said: "How's that, Uncle Billy?" He said: "I've got a pack outfit, a string of traps, a rifle, and plenty of ammunition, and money enough to buy chuck for two years."

Uncle Billy at eighty was a most remarkable man mentally and physically. He had still the eye of an



Uncle Billy Hamilton and Author at the D.K. Ranch





eagle, a most remarkable memory, and was full of humor and pep all the time.

He had all his life taken a cold dip in the river the first thing on arising. He did this practically until he died, many mornings taking an axe with him to chop a hole through the ice.

He was perhaps the greatest talker of Indian sign language that the West ever produced. Fellows who have seen him talking sign language with Indians, have told me that more than once the Indians would tell him to slow down; "not so fast," they would say. He could talk with both hands at once. He told me that one time the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, D. C., had sent for him to come there and record just how the sign language was done. He said: "I did not like the East much. I was there forty-two days and lost forty-two pounds."

I had just started in to hunt bear, when I met Uncle Billy, and I remember one day when I was passing the time of day with him, at the U2 bunk house, he said to me: "Mack, don't ever take any chances with a bear you think is dead. Once I shot an old female black bear, and she appeared to drop stone dead. I went up to her and put my knife into her throat to skin her, when with a roar and a leap she was up, and just missed the side of my face with a sweep of her claws. I dodged her, and

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grabbed up my old 40/82 and killed her, but boy, that 'learned' me never to go up to a wounded bear without first prodding him well with a stick—and a long one at that."

One night they were having a dance at the DK Ranch and Uncle Billy was camped nearby trapping beaver. When he heard the music, he had to come over to see them step. Old Billy, then over eighty, sat on a box in the kitchen, smoking his old corncob pipe. He looked on a while, but things were not snappy enough to suit that old cavalier, and jumping up, smiling, came striding into the main room, and bawled out: "Hell, let a young feller show you old men *how* to dance." And grabbing the nearest pretty girl, he sure did step some, much to the enjoyment of all. You couldn't help but love old Uncle Billy; he was so real, so full of zest and humor.

## V

### OLD "SILVER JIM GAMEN"

I ONLY met Silver Jim about three times in my life, once at the DK Ranch, and twice at frontier day celebrations. But Old Jim was a type well-known in the history of the West. He was a travelling race-horse man. He loved horses, and he loved a race-track, and all that went with them. He drifted all over the West, racing, buying and selling horses. He generally travelled with a pack outfit, riding his best horse, and packing and driving the others along.

Jim was a most picturesque character when I met him. He was about fifty-eight years old, five feet ten, with his boots on, and stood straight as an Indian. He had a strong aquiline face, long hair, a large flowing mustache and dark, piercing, deep set eyes. When not aroused he had a gentle, kindly nature, even poetic. He loved nature and horses and children. On the other hand, I saw him once at a race-track at Red Lodge when he thought he

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was getting a raw deal in a race, and he looked and sounded like a grizzly bear fixing to eat somebody up.

I'll never forget Old Silver Jim Gamen, because he was kind enough to initiate me into the mysteries of the "Oregon Diamond Hitch." No man could call himself a real mountain man, who could not spread the "Diamond" over the top of his pack horses. When Old Jim saw I wanted to learn to throw the "Diamond," he patiently put in most of a day "learnin'" me.

## VI

### THE DK—DAN KAUFMAN RANCH

THE DK Ranch was situated about two miles east of our Camp. It was right on the bank of the East Rosebud River, where the East Rosebud Cañon just began. The river there was winding and still and beautiful. Wonderful mountain scenery cast its charm and glory upon it. But more attractive still to the hearts of the wandering bachelor cowboys, was the warm and hearty welcome that we always received from "Dan" and Mrs. K. and "Mary" (Mrs. K's sister). These good people didn't have an overplus of material wealth, but how bountifully were they filled with all those treasures of the human heart, which are expressed by a hearty welcome, liberal sharing with others of food and shelter—joy, interest and humor.

We cowboys always said, and it was literally true, that all trails led to the DK, and no matter how many ponies were tied up to their hitching-

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post, there was always room for more. I have seen as many as a dozen there for days at a time.

Mrs. Kaufman was a delightful little person. Her smiling black eyes always vibrated welcome, along with her "Git down and come in." And she could beat them all as a tasty cook! Her greatest epicurean triumph for my tongue was her cream pie; it would almost make a man leave home. I got so fond of this pie that I decided to find out how it all happened. So one winter day when I was visiting there, I got her to make one, and as she put it together with flour, cream, eggs and sugar, I made a record with pad and pencil. But it was of no avail. Other cooks of all kinds and colors have tried to make it, but they never caught the DK flavor.

"Dan" was a tall, dark-haired, dark-eyed Pennsylvanian. He stood six feet two, with his boots on, and was good-natured to a fault. He loved the outdoors—and to shoot and fish. He liked people, and he had a real laugh while his eyes sparkled with humor.

And "Mary" with her smiling black eyes and dimpled cheeks, her beauty of face and figure and spirit, made captives of us all. Many happy days have I spent in and on the DK and I tell you it meant a lot to us lonely cowboys, batching it out there in the foothills.

## VII

### OLD TOMMY JONES

LITTLE Old Tommy Jones was one of those derelicts from that part of Custer's Cavalry, which failed to arrive for the Custer Massacre. He had led a hard and adventurous life as an Indian fighter. Now he had become filled with rheumatism, and had an obsession for being alone. He drifted out to Montana, and finally homesteaded at the very mouth of the East Rosebud Cañon. He built a small log cabin with two small windows, and with no floor and a small log barn and corrals. A fine spring came down the mountain side, and past his door. He must have had a little money laid by, for soon he bought some good grade Hereford cattle and a few saddle ponies.

Tommy, for some unknown reason, did not like to have anybody visit or stop with him. He had a long telescope which he used constantly to search the foothills, looking for any horseman who might be headed in his direction. If he located anybody



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who looked as if he was coming to see him, he would lock his cabin door, and pull out for the thick, bushy slopes behind his cabin, and stay there, watching and hiding, until the visitor had left; then he would return.

One September when the fall roundup was working this territory, the story got around among the cowboys about Old Tommy's trips to the brush when visitors hove in sight. So, being always in for any sort of devilment, the cowboys figured out that it would be a good joke on Old Tommy to keep him out in the brush for two solid days. They arranged that every four hours for forty-eight hours a cowboy would arrive and stay at Tommy's camp until relieved by the next fellow; this they did, but Tommy never showed up until the last man had stood his guard, and ridden away.

They said this might teach Tommy to be more sociable, but he never got so he liked people to stay. I remember one time, another cowboy and I stopped there for lunch on our way up the Cañon on a deer hunt. He hated like anything to cook for anybody, and made no sign of fixing lunch, but finally gave in and made a batch of baking powder biscuits and dug up some honey and boiled tea.

When we were pulling out to go after the deer, he suggested that he would relish a hindquarter, but

expressly told us not to bring it to the cabin, but to leave it by his corral gate. We killed a nice white-tail buck, but the fellow with me said, "Let's take the meat on down to the DK where we won't have to drop it at the corral gate," and so Tommy had to live on biscuits and honey for a while longer.

Later on, when Tommy was doctoring in Red Lodge, Charley Wright, Bob Leavins and myself and the rest of our party were coming down from Armstrong's Lake and were just riding past Tommy's cabin when a real mountain hailstorm hit us, and we just had to get the women and children into the cabin. It was locked, but that did not matter in that country, should the occasion warrant it, and so we broke the lock and piling in our bedding, and chuck, made out for the night. Old Tommy found out who it was who had entered his sanctuary, and ever after refused to even talk to Charley, Bob or me.

What a twisted, strange bit of human nature he was. Those who lived nearest him, and knew him best, swore that every once in a while he'd feel so onery that he'd go out on the hillside, cut a switch, and beat himself hard until his bad spell left him.

## VIII

### FAST TO A BULL'S TAIL

ONE winter when the grass was very short on the range, we gathered all our cows and calves and put them in a large pasture on the edge of the badlands, near Bear Creek. Every morning, I'd ride this pasture, keeping tabs on our cattle and cutting out the strays. On several occasions, in fact, much too often, a big, scrubby, short-horn bull had broken down the wire fence, and let himself and other stray cattle in on our grass.

All this meant a lot of fence fixing, and hard riding to cut out all the cattle that got mixed in with ours. So when I saw this gentleman in again, one morning, I was all "het up" and "hostile"; and I made up my mind to give that old boy a chase and a beating that he would never forget.

I got off my cow pony, tightened up my cinch, got on, uncoiled my rope, tied three big knots at the end of it, and I was "all set."

I slipped into the herd, cut out old Mr. Bull,



The Odds Looked About Even

Drawn by Charles M. Russell



and headed him towards the break in the fence through which he had entered. Then I closed in on him, riding at full speed, yelling and popping him with the knotted rope at every jump. This made him "ory-eyed" with madness and he frothed at the mouth and rolled his tail, like an angry lion.

Suddenly I felt something pull at my right spur, and glancing down, saw that the bushy end of his tail was tangled in the rowel of my spur. We were going at terrific speed, and I saw myself being dragged off my horse and mangled to death. I tried desperately to pull and shake it loose, but it was "plumb fast." We were coming to some broken country where I knew it would be impossible to keep at the bull's side. I was "sweating blood"; something must be done within a few seconds, or I would be killed. Then my guardian angel whispered in my ear: "Your leg is stronger than the bull's tail." Like a flash I saw my chance and I rode my good little cow pony right up to the bull's side, getting all the slack I could, then, taking my right foot out of the stirrup and holding fast to the horn of my saddle, I swung my horse clear around in the opposite direction, shut my eyes and prayed God it would happen, and it did. Two feet of the bull's tail was hanging from my spur, and I was saved.

## IX

### WESTERN HOSPITALITY

It was in February, 1902; the thermometer was registering around thirty below; it was cloudy and windy and biting. Jimmy Hunter, a ranchman living about thirty-five miles to the south of us, had been rounding up some "tail ends" (cattle that had strayed off his main range) and he had seen some of our brand drifting south and had let Charley Wright know about it. Charley thought that in spite of the weather, he and I had better hit it out and try and gather up these strays, before they wandered clean out of the country. We took nothing along with us but a bite of lunch, for we figured we could put up at Hunter's, or some other nearby ranch when night came.

We made Clark's Fork River by noon, built a little sagebrush fire and ate our lunch. Our cattle had been seen in the sand coulee country and so, fording the river, we made off in that direction. We rode for a couple of hours and never saw a living

thing, not even a coyote. Not a ranch was in sight, just sand hills and scant sagebrush and the cold penetrated into our marrow. All the time we were drifting farther and farther away from any shelter we knew of. About half-past three we picked up cattle sign, and following it down to a dry bottom, ran on to some of our three-year-old steers, but only a few head. We left these, and kept on out into the desert country to the east, as we wanted to pick up those farthest away first, and then work back toward home. Four-thirty came and darkness started to settle around us. We were fifty miles from home and twenty-five from any ranch we knew of, and yet we wanted to get what we had started for, so we kept going.

We jogged on and on, very cold, and very silent. Then, looking off towards the north, we saw quite a bunch of cattle in the shelter of a high cut bank, so we wormed our way down through the brakes, and were tickled to death to find all the steers we were looking for, about thirty head.

In a minute we had started them across country towards the first bunch we had located, but knew we could not get there that night. In those days we were taught to suffer and stick, and smile, and so while we were not smiling so you could notice it, still we were suffering, and we did intend to stick,



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and to "siwash" it out that night in the shelter of a cut bank and a sagebrush fire.

Just then about a mile and a half to the north, we saw a light, only a flicker, but what a wonderful thing a little flicker is to men who are half frozen, and half starved, and who figure on "siwashing it" on a night that's thirty below. We were soon at this homesteader's fence, and putting our cattle through the gate, loped quickly up towards the light.

Arriving at the door of the shack we saw that the people living there, were very, very poor; they seemed to have had just enough of this world's goods to barely get by. There was only one room, about fourteen by sixteen feet. In it was one double bed, a couple of cribs for children and a cook stove and two chairs, a few cooking pots and a wash basin on a box. By their speech, these people appeared to be from Nebraska or Missouri. At first they seemed somewhat frightened to have two tough-looking, half-frozen cowmen burst in upon their quiet household, but this was only momentary, and when they knew that we were a couple of cowmen caught out on the range, they went right to work to make us happy. They built up the fire, fixed supper, made us a pot of coffee, and then sat and talked to us as we ravenously lapped up everything in sight.

After smoking a bit, it came bed time, and I figured, that as these kind folks had only one room, and one bed, and one roll of bedding, we would take our saddle blankets and go for the hay in the barn.

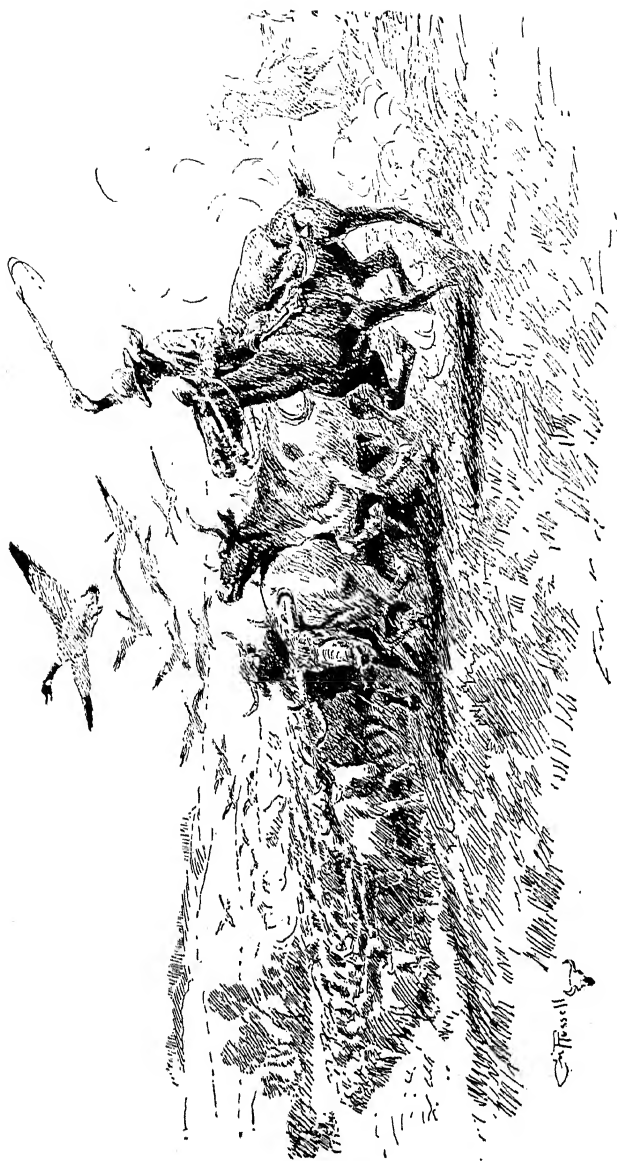
We arose, thanked them for the hot supper, and their hospitality, and started for the door. "Where are you going?" they asked. We said, "We'll make out fine with saddle blankets and the hay," but they simply would not stand for it. They told us to go out and tend to our ponies, and they would make us a bed on the floor, which would be ready when we returned, and when we came back, they were all in bed, and our bed, which was truly half of theirs, was waiting for us on the floor, and as I lay there thinking how lucky we were, I also thought what a wonderful act of hospitality had been performed, unconsciously and graciously by these simple-hearted people.

And whenever I hear or read the word, hospitality, I see that little one-room cabin out on the plains, a man and his wife in a big wooden bed, and two children in cribs by their side, and on the floor two cowpunchers rolled up in some homemade blankets. And I thank God that one of them was myself, and that I had experienced this unforgettable act of western hospitality.

## X

### THE GOOSE STAMPEDE

It was towards the last of June; Charley Wright had come out to our camp to captain the calf round-up. We had ridden, gathered and branded all the new calves between Butcher Creek and Fishtail. Fly time was coming and we decided to move the herd for the summer months up to the brushy brakes of the East and West Rosebud Rivers. We had about five hundred in the bunch, and were making it slowly and nicely along the trail on the west side of the East Rosebud. Another three-quarters of a mile and we would turn them loose, and our job would be ended. But the Great Spirit willed otherwise, for hearing a strange noise we turned in our saddles and saw, flying very low and coming right over us, a large flock of geese. I've seen cattle stampede quite often, but this time when those big flapping wings and honking honks passed overhead, they did a "flip flop and I'm on my way" faster and with more real enthusiasm than I had heretofore wit-



Like a Flash They Turned

Drawn by Charles M. Russell



nessed. We barely had time to get out of their way, and as we viewed them through the dust, on their way down the river, it brought to our minds that old cowboy chant "Roll your tails and roll them high, for we'll all be angels bye and bye."

We raced along with them for two miles before we had room enough to ride around them, shooting and yelling, crowding the leaders in a circle, and finally had them all milling and stopped.

We rested them for a little while and again putting them up the river trail, turned them safely loose by sundown.

## XI

### BOSS RUTLEDGE MAKES ME DRINK LIQUOR

WE all figured that Boss Rutledge was a renegade moonshiner from the mountains of North Carolina. In fact, he told us as much.

He was true to type, spare of body and of mind. When he drifted up into our country, and took up a mountain homestead, he was probably about thirty-six years old, but looked older. He was about five feet ten with his worn out shoes on; he was very poor (physically), with high cheek bones, and deep-set blue eyes shaded with bushy eyebrows. His hair was long and sparse, his nose was aquiline. He never had learned to read or write. He never married, but lived alone in his mountain shack at the head of Willow Creek and aimed to make a living by raising horses; running them, practically all the year through, in the brushy brakes, near his homestead.

One summer morning when Charley Wright was out with us, he said: "Let's ride up to Boss's and

## Rutledge Makes Me Drink Liquor 37

see if we can get him to come down and cut a little hay for us," so we ran in the ponies, roped what we wanted, and saddling up, loped up the creek to see old Boss.

Well, Boss had a way of relaxation via the liquor route, and when we knocked on his cabin door, and heard only liquor soaked cuss words, we knew he was "celebrating." We pushed open the door, and there was old Boss, lying on his board bunk, covered with a few old dirty blankets. On the floor by his side was a gallon demijohn of whiskey. He had been fighting liquor for three or four days, hadn't eaten a bite, and he was feeling grouchy and mean.

We sat down on some boxes opposite to him but soon saw it was hopeless to talk work to him. But Boss had quite a lot to say to us, and the first and main thing was, that we must all help him empty the jug. Boss always had good liquor, and so, for Charley and George Hoffman, this invitation to have a swallow was not very disturbing. But at that time, I thought it was quite a crime to drink hard liquor, and so when he came staggering over my way, with his gallon of rum, I said, "Sorry, Boss, but I don't use it." He kind of turned away and I thought I was going to get away with it, but I had failed to sense his real mood, and the meanness in his eyes. In his condition, and to his line of



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reasoning, to refuse to drink with him was an unforgivable insult.

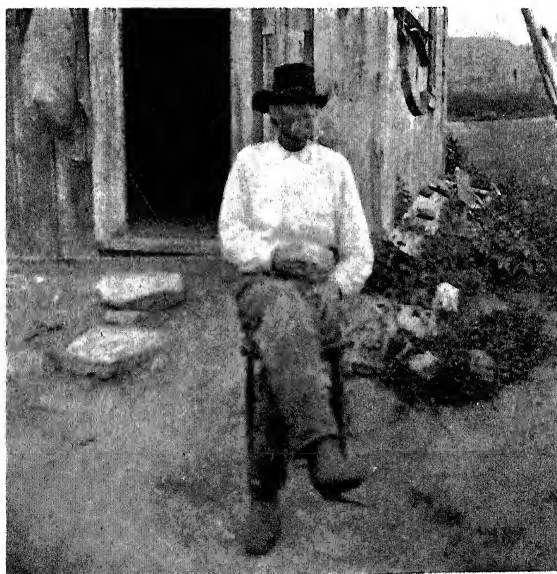
I watched him reel over to his bunk, reach up and take his Colt forty-five down from its peg, and with it in his right hand and the jug balanced on his left elbow, he came back to me. His little blood-shot eyes blazed with madness, and insult and murder. "Drink, damn you, drink"—he drawled, handing me the jug and tightening his grip on the Colt. I knew he was just crazy enough to kill a man, and believe me, I went through the motions of swallowing rum, and that "right *pronto!*"

But Boss Rutledge was not always drunk, and ordinarily was the whitest kind of a mountain man. In fact, "being white" was one of his pet ideas and this idea would always come to his lips while in town, celebrating; he'd educate the crowd by yelling at the top of his voice, "Here's Old Boss Rutledge, the Bull of the Woods, when you find a whiter man than Boss Rutledge, kill the son ——"

Yes, old Boss was a square shooter, all the way through. He would always share with you the last of his sour-dough biscuits; his cabin door was always unlocked and you were welcome to it all. He would lend a hand at round-up time or at a branding bee cheerfully and cared little for any recompense.



Alfred Nick Visits the D.K. Ranch



Boss Rutledge



## Rutledge Makes Me Drink Liquor 39

I will never forget the time when he and old man Yancy drove right up to our cabin door at midnight. They were both gloriously drunk. They pulled us out of bed, made us build a fire and sit up, and sit in, with them, all the night through; while they drank and sang old North Carolinian mountain songs. As the sun rose in the east, we helped them climb into their spring wagon, and they rolled away perfectly happy.

## XII

### KEEPING HOUSE WITH YOUR EYES SHUT

It was along in April of 1902. George Hoffmar had pulled out for Wyoming and I was holding down the HF cow camp alone. Snow still lay a foot or more deep over the foothills; every day I rode the line, throwing back our steers that were drifting beyond our range. I was riding without glasses or without blackening my face around my eyes, and the glare of the spring sun was terrific. One morning I woke up, rubbed my eyes and tried to open them. I found I couldn't. They were swelled up like a couple of marbles, absolutely tight. And then it dawned on me that I must be snow-blind—snow-blind and alone. It was not a very pretty picture.

At first I was a bit panicky, but soon determined that these sentiments would not help in the least. I figured out that the blindness would not last over two weeks and that I had grub enough for a month. I knew the exact place and position of

## Keeping House with Eyes Shut 41

every pot and pan, every sack of flour and other food bags; I had worlds of wood chopped and stacked all around the cabin. I had plenty of hay in the barn for my cow pony "Coyote" that I was riding.

For ten solid days I never saw out of one of my eyes. I'd get up when I sensed that the sun was an hour or so high (I could feel a greater warmth to the air), and dressing, which consisted of pulling on boots, pants and sweater (that's all), would feel my way to the stove, lift off the lids, lay in kindling and other wood and touch it off with a match. Then I'd take the oatmeal pot down off its nail, set it on the stove, put in some water, some oatmeal and some salt and let it and the coffee pot heat up, while I went down to the barn, feeling my way by such well known objects as the gate posts, the bridge over the creek, the corral gate, and the barn door. It was about a hundred yards there, and I got quite expert walking back and forth. I'd feed "Coyote" hay and oats, pat and caress him a bit (for I was lonely and I was mighty fond of him), open the barn door, so that he could get down to water and then I'd go back to the cabin, put some more wood in the stove, stir the oatmeal and listen for the coffee to boil. Then I'd know breakfast was ready. I lived on oatmeal, stewed prunes and coffee for ten

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days. Between meals I kept bathing my eyes in cold water. I did this continuously until the tenth day when the swelling went down just a little and I could peep through and see once more. It seemed like being born again, and I was some happy boy!

Never again have I exposed my eyes to the terrific glare of the snow and the sun without either wearing glasses or blackening the eyes, nose and cheeks with burned cork or charcoal.

## XIII

### A BIRD OF PASSAGE

ONE June evening, just as the afternoon sun was transfiguring the mountain peaks with its glory, George and I were standing by the cabin. We were drinking it all in when suddenly we saw a strange horse and rider appear on the sky line to the west. A few minutes more and supper would be ready. We waited to see if the stranger figured on eating with us (for in those days it was the unwritten law of the country that anyone arriving at meal time, was sure to be asked to "git down and come in and have some supper").

Down the slopes he came, directly up to our cabin. He was riding a good, strong, dappled-grey cow pony; both the rider and the pony looked as if they had made good time over a long trail.

The man was a true type of the foothill rider, a horseman from the heel of his boots to the top of his Stetson, but the lines of his face, the cold steel of his grey eyes, and the closely shaven hair, made



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us a little suspicious of him. He lacked the quiet serenity and quick smile of a genuine cowman.

"Howdy, Boys, where do I hit the trail to Red Lodge?" he snapped out in hard, quick tones. I told him the trail was just over the hill to the east, but that supper was all ready to set out, and that he'd better have some and camp with us for the night, as it was now getting dark. At first he declined, and was about to ride away, when I told him that Red Lodge was thirty miles away, and that there would be another day tomorrow; and then seemingly with quite some misgivings, he decided to put up for the night.

George took him down to the barn, showed him where the hay, oats and water were, and after seeing his pony fixed up in good shape, they came back to the cabin, where I had supper out on the table, and we all set to.

Our stranger overlooked the usual formality of telling us who he was, and of course, we never asked him. To do so, would be an insult, in those days. He ate his supper with relish, saying practically nothing. When he finished he rolled a cigarette and sat with us, while we cleaned up the dishes. He made a few general remarks regarding the weather, the condition of the grass and how cattle wintered, and then said he was pretty tired and guessed he

would "hit the hay." We told him we had plenty of extra bedding in the cabin and that we would be glad to make him down a good bed, but he flatly refused to sleep in the cabin, so George, taking some blankets and the lantern piloted him back to the barn where he bedded down alongside of his pony. George told him to be up for five o'clock breakfast and left him for the night.

Morning came, we rolled out, fixed breakfast and not seeing anything of our short-haired, hard-boiled rider, we went to the barn to see if he was still asleep. But no, he was not slumbering, not he. He was far away; he had flown while the darkness still shadowed him. We figured he was a horse thief, hunting new territory.

## XIV

### NANCY MORRIS—PIONEER

NANCY Morris was the wife of R. O. Morris, owner of the U2 Ranch located on the banks of the East Rosebud River, near Roscoe, Montana. This couple had come to Montana in the early eighties. Landing at Livingston, they finally drifted around the northern end of the Absarokee range, and camped at the head of Willow Creek, now the upper end of my ranch. They made a living raising cattle and horses. Mrs. Morris was a wiry, little woman, with blue eyes and dark hair. I guess she was about five feet four in height and would weigh about one hundred and fifteen pounds. She was nerve and courage and love personified, and she never failed anyone in distress.

She could ride like an old cowhand, knew all about cattle and horses, and pigs and chickens and could run her ranch single handed, if she had to. She was the most indefatigable worker I ever saw. She would get up at four-thirty each morning, milk



Nancy Morris as We All Knew Her



Mary on "Mollie"



nearly all of the twenty cows, come in and cook breakfast for six or a dozen people, clean her dishes, take care of the pigs and chickens, hoe in the garden, saddle up and ride the range for an hour or two. Then come flying back in a high lope, put her pony in the barn, build a fire in the cook stove, get a big dinner for all the men folk and clean dishes again. Then make butter for an hour or so, and saddle up again and ride out on the range to see how her pet horses were doing, perhaps visit a neighboring ranch or two, then gallop back home, turn her pony loose, do more chores, get another big supper, wash up again, then milk the cows again, get out her knitting for a half hour, then bed. This was her day's work, pretty much every day, with some variations. I've seen her dog-tired, but I've never seen her dispirited. She was always game, interested and full of human repartee.

She was telling me one day about how they came to settle on Willow Creek, and how when they first came, the Indians (Crows) used to always happen around at meal times for a free bite. She said one day she had the table set for six, and had the apple-pie cut in six pieces, when along came a young Crow Indian Chief, dismounted, made his salutations, came into her tent, observed that there were six people to eat, and six slices of pie, and immediately

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proceeded to take up and bite the point out of each and every piece. He wanted to give a square deal to all.

Mrs. Morris' powers of observation were very acute, and if there was the slightest thing about your looks that was not just right, she would tell you about it.

One day Frank Chapman, Jr., and I were coming back from Columbus, where we had shipped some cattle. We had been on the trail for six or seven days and not having had a toothbrush along, my teeth were not quite as white as they should have been. Anyhow, they did not pass Nancy's keen scrutiny, and in that high, piping voice of hers, full of interest and humor, she said, "Say, you've got scurvy on your teeth, hain't yer? Gun powder is good for that." Frank and I nearly passed out with laughter, for who but Nancy Morris would hand anyone such a delightfully personal line.

One afternoon, Ted Griffith who had spent the summer with us on the ranch, and who, expecting to go east in a day or so, had shipped his faultlessly perfect saddle and outfit home, was riding down the creek in a very old and dilapidated saddle that someone had left at the ranch, when Mrs. Morris came loping over the hills and rode up alongside. She immediately observed the old hull of a saddle

that Ted was riding (I didn't blame her, for it was tied together with bail wire and twine and the stirrups didn't match, about the vintage of 1880), and smiling with suppressed humor, she said, "Say, boy, where in the world did you dig up that old hull? It looks old enough to suck eggs."

But just as long as there is an old timer left in that part of the country, Nancy Morris will be lovingly remembered, for she took under her motherly care all who needed help and shelter. To the lonely bachelors living in the foothill cow-camps, she gave pies and cakes and crullers, and many a good meal. To the old timers who had met ill fortune, she opened her home, and for months at a time, yes, in some cases for years, she gave them food and a bed in the bunk house. She seemed to love everything and everybody. She kept her faith in human nature and no matter how marred and weak that human nature was, she could always see the spirit, as God intended it to be, abiding within.

I can see her now with a little bantam rooster on her left shoulder, talking to it, teaching it to love, and kiss her, like a child. May her brave, strong, loving soul never be forgotten.



## XV

### COYOTES RUN A RELAY RACE WITH A JACK- RABBIT

ONE afternoon, George Hoffman and I were riding back from our daily work of riding the range. Coming over the divide between our ranch and the East Rosebud River, we noticed a coyote sitting on a hillside, and intently watching something in the valley below. Looking towards the valley, we soon saw what it was all about. Another coyote was giving a jack-rabbit the race of his life.

We pulled up our ponies to see the fun. It was the first time I had ever seen a wild animal chasing another wild animal. Soon we saw that this was no ordinary one-man race but a relay race, on the coyote's part, for the first coyote took the jack-rabbit for a lap of about a mile and circled it right back to where his partner was sitting, waiting for his turn. And then the first coyote quit, and his pard dashed in for his lap!

Going down hill the coyote would almost catch

Mr. Jack-rabbit. He would have done so if Mr. Jack had not done some real dodging. Going uphill, the long springy legs of Mr. Jack gave him a distinct advantage, and he easily drew ahead of old man Coyote, but in that country there are as many valleys as there are hills, and so what the Jack gained going up the slopes, the coyote gained going down. Every time the race turned down hill we were sure the Jack would meet his Waterloo, but just as it looked hopeless, he would squirm, flatten out, and dodge until he hit the slope again.

We watched this race primordial for three complete laps. Then the Jack had a hunch to quit circling, and ran straight up a ridge toward the mountain and the last we saw of him he was doing well, with both coyotes quite far behind. We wished him luck and rode on down to our cow-camp.

## XVI

### OLD FRANK KELLY—COWMAN

OLD Frank Kelly was a product of the real old-time cow days. He had punched cows in California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, and finally in Montana. He was a real dyed-in-the-wool Irishman, full of wit and jest and humor, with a heart in him as big as an ox. He stood above five feet eight in his high-heeled boots and tipped the scales at about one hundred and sixty. His eyes were blue, his mustache and hair grey, and when I first met him, he was about sixty-eight years old.

Old man Kelly ran the two-bar (==) outfit on the headwaters of Butcher Creek. This was his last stand. Here he aimed to, and did, put in his last days among the cattle and horses he so dearly loved. Although he was a great friend of all the good looking girls in the country, he remained "heart whole and fancy free" to the end! Everybody loved Old Frank; he was so interested in everything and everybody; so cordial in his wel-

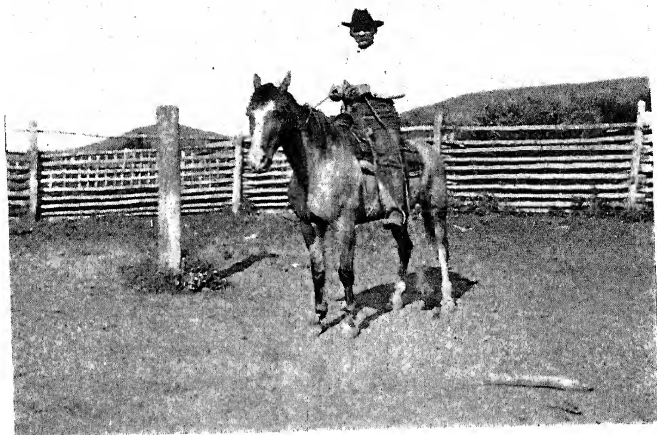
come, so full of humor and wit! Every wandering rider of the range, overtaken by darkness, who was anywhere near to "Frank Kelly's," always rode in, assured of a welcome.

I remember well one night after a hard day's ride in the lower Red Lodge Creek country, when Hoffman and I spent the night with Old Frank. Besides "Wild Bill" Meyer who always camped with Kelly, there were three or four other riders there. For dinner we had beans and cabbage, coffee and tapioca pudding. Old Frank was a great believer in these victuals and he kept them on the stove constantly.

After dinner had been eaten, and the dishes and pots cleaned up, we all sat around to hear Old Frank tell yarns and crack jokes. He lit up his old corn-cob pipe, sat down sideways on a chair, crossed one leg over the other, and then his eyes commenced to sparkle and his lips part in a smile, and he commenced to spin a yarn, and shoot a joke at one of us. He told us of his old racehorse days in California, of several fights he had had with the Indians in Wyoming, of the old cowboy days on the Laramie Plains, and of life with the old trail herds. He was a natural born raconteur and enjoyed it all so much, that it was just like watching a play to hear and watch him.

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Finally, it came time to bed down, and George doubled up with Old Frank, and I rolled in with "Wild Bill" in his tarpaulin bed which we spread on the kitchen floor. It seemed but an hour or so when we heard "Wild Bill" rattling around the stove getting breakfast. We all rolled out, washed up, ate our eggs, fried spuds, bread and coffee, and thanking Old Frank for putting us up, we all saddled up and rode away; Kelly stood by his gate post telling us to be sure and stop in soon again—bless his dear old Irish heart!



Frank Kelly—Cowman



In the Blizzard on Papoose Creek



## XVII

### WINTER WEATHER

OLD Montana can deal out some real winter weather. Sometimes for a week or two it is not safe to go out of sight of your cabin. Quite often the thermometer would register thirty-five to fifty below for several weeks at a time. And along with the severe temperature there would often be a terrific wind that would just about blow a man off a horse.

Very vividly can I remember one terrific storm I got into while attempting to cross the high ridge from the DK ranch over to our cow camp. I had been staying at the DK for several days, during all of which time it had stormed hard and continually, but along about noon it broke away a bit, and I decided to hit it over home. I saddled up old "Coyote," broke the ice, and forded the Rosebud and slowly climbed up the rocky slopes of the divide. I barely made it over the crown of the hill when down out of the cañon rolled a cloud as black as ink. In a second I was enveloped in the darkness of



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a Montana blizzard. I literally could not see my horse's ears. With the snow came a terrific icy wind. No horse living could face that storm on that high bald divide. For a while we simply drifted with the storm. Then suddenly it dawned on me that if I should drift to the north of our fences, I might perish, for then I would have lost all real landmarks, and no man could live in such a storm for over an hour or so.

The horse, as long as he had me on his back, absolutely refused to go broadside to the storm, and we had to go that way, to hit our fences. So I decided to get off the horse and crawl, leading him, but I could not stand on my feet. I figured that by keeping him always downhill, I'd be bound to land up against our fence line, and so in that freezing blackness, on my hands and knees, leading old Coyote, I crawled step by step down off that high divide, hoping, praying that I would hit a fence line, and I could follow it around to a gate, and so on in.

A half hour passed and no fence came in sight. I was becoming chilled to the bone. My teeth began to chatter and the whirling blast, dancing in front of my eyes, made my head swim, but I realized I must get in quickly or perish, for my strength was going out of me. And then the fence rose right in front of me. My, what a sight to a man lost in a blizzard!

But I was not in yet. I still had three-quarters of a mile to go and I tried to remember my direction so as to find the gate. Once again I found that I could turn my back to the storm, for the fence ran north for about half a mile. So by holding on to the wire with my left hand, I was able to stand up and with bowed head staggered along to the gate, opened it, and with "Coyote" now leading me, we soon were at our barn, whose doors seemed like those of heaven.

I put Coyote in, fed him plenty of oats and hay, and beat it up to my happy home. Soon a fire crackled in the cook stove, and coffee boiled, and I was safe.

During this intense cold weather, we really had to wage a battle with it to keep from freezing. I mean even in our cabins. Somebody had to keep feeding the stove from five-thirty A.M. till midnight every day. On these terrible cold nights when the wind blew intensely, we used to always stay up and tend the fire until midnight, and then with kindlings for the morning all shaved and ready, we'd pile in our blankets, just removing our boots and stay there till about five-thirty A.M., when we would be up and at it again. When we left the stove at midnight, the kettle would be boiling merrily. At five-thirty the next morning, it would be frozen solid.

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Close to the mountains as we were, one could never tell when a blizzard would sweep down out of the canyon and engulf us. I remember one day in March, 1902, George Hoffman and I had been working on a root cellar, and we had just quit work for our noon meal, when two four-horse teams pulled in. They came in from some ranch far below us, and had come up to the mountains after more fire wood. We asked the drivers to have lunch with us, and after lunch showed them the trail to the dead timber patch, at the foot of the mountain. When they left our cabin about one-thirty P.M. it was rather a nice afternoon, not very cold, with the sun partly out and only a moderate wind blowing. Twenty minutes later, it was as dark as night; the snow rolled over the ground in great sheets driven by a sixty-mile gale. We knew that no four-horse team could live in such weather, and they were headed right into it. Also the fellows driving were not familiar with the country, and we knew they would never find the cabin without help. So George and I piled on plenty of clothes, and with a lantern apiece, we staggered up the creek bottom, figuring that the teams would surely pull for shelter and that we would find them somewhere along Willow Creek.

We had drifted up the Creek I guess about a mile, when we heard the boys a-cussing and yelling at

the horses, who seemed to be plumb distracted, and were all wound up with the brush, but still hitched to the wagons. Believe me, those boys were glad to see us coming up with lanterns, for they were in bad, all tangled up with the horses fighting and trying to get away. The darkness made it impossible to disentangle the horses properly, and all the time the men were suffering intensely from the cold, since they were not dressed for any such weather.

With the help of the lanterns we straightened the horses out, unhitched them, and then the whole outfit came back to our Camp. We put the horses in the barn, came to the cabin, made coffee and I never saw two more grateful boys than our friends from the lower country. They said they surely would have perished if we had not come up and led them in.

One morning about five of us Rosebud riders met on the trail to Red Lodge. It was bitter cold, about fifteen below, but no snow was falling and the wind was not bad. We jogged along merrily with quib and jest, and had gotten as far as the John Henry Ranch, about nine miles west of Red Lodge, when, turning in our saddles, and looking away off north across the Yellowstone, we saw a long, low, black cloud coming with lightning speed straight at us. We figured we would surely get it in about

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twenty minutes, so we hit a high lope, figuring to get as far as possible before it swallowed us up. We made the top of the John Henry Hill when, with a terrific roar and shivering blast, it covered us with darkness. We could not see our horses' ears. None of us could see the rider next to him or hear his voice. But we knew the trail well, and we were going with the storm, and that meant everything, for the ponies just flew along, seeming to know just where we were headed for. We kept track of each other by each reaching out and touching the fellow to his right. It was a real "he blizzard," and when the Graveyard-flat and Red Lodge hove in sight, we all breathed a sigh of relief, for to lose the trail in such a storm was a life and death affair.

Three solid days it kept up, but we all rather enjoyed it. It made the joys of the big city all the keener.

I remember one especially bad spell of weather we had in the Spring of 1902. For three solid months, January, February and March, it was just one storm after another. We were feeding some stock cattle and "line riding" some dry stuff, and in all this time George and I never saw another soul. We forgot the days of the week and towards the end did not even know what month it was. It was really a strange experience. We seemed

to be living in a world entirely by ourselves; and when finally a human being did cross our skyline, we galloped out to renew our acquaintance with mankind, and find out how near Springtime it really was.

## XVIII

### "WILD BILL" MEYER—COWBOY

I DON'T know what part of the country "Wild Bill" honored as his birthplace, but I know he drifted up to Montana with some of the trail herds from the southwest. They told me he had been given the nickname of "Wild Bill" because of the gun fights he had been mixed up in.

"Wild Bill" was a real "he-man," and a distinct personality. He stood about six feet high, weighed about two hundred and twenty pounds, and was as strong as three ordinary men. He was of the "blond giant" type, fair haired, blue eyed, blond mustache and had a great laugh. He would make the cabin shake with it. He was a great philosopher, and at the same time had a hard and fast opinion on any and every subject. As a cowman, he couldn't be beat. He had that easy-going disposition that made him famous as a boss of a beef herd. They always said that no man could ever put a bunch of beef steers on the railroad in as good flesh as he did.

He was a fairly good roper, and an expert at throwing cattle with his hands. I've seen him walk right up to a two-year old steer in a corral, and with nothing but his big hands grab the steer and lift him clean off his pins, down him, and hold him there with ease.

One time, when Bill was working with an outfit in the lower Rosebud country, he was riding the circle about thirty miles from the wagon when his horse fell suddenly and threw Bill on a rock, breaking his leg. This was in the early nineties and there was not a single ranch house between him and the wagon, so with one leg badly broken and suffering real torture, “Wild Bill” crawled on his hands and one knee, thirty miles back to the wagon. It took him two days and a half and he had nothing to eat but mountain scenery and water. “Wild Bill” was also bullet proof. You simply could not kill him, no matter how many times you punctured him. Bill had no less than a dozen holes in his hide when I knew him.

The last time he had a fight with some old timer out there, they both got lead in their man but neither reached a vital spot. But I guess because Bill was larger he stopped more bullets than his friend. Anyhow Bill got five 38's sprinkled evenly over his anatomy and instead of keeling over, like



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any ordinary human, he climbed his blaze-faced pony, rode home, hitched up a team to his buggy, and peacefully drove into the hospital at Red Lodge, not saying a word to anybody about it. In a couple of weeks he was back on the range again, his joyous laugh ringing as loudly as ever.

## XIX

### OUR PUSSY CAT HAS A CALLER

OUT in the foothill country of the Rockies the mice and rats are pretty numerous. Most all the "batch" cow-camps were full of them and our happy home was no exception. For a while we tried to trap them; then we tried shooting them from our beds with six shooters before we crawled out in the morning. We'd see them by the dozens running along the log rafters, but as the bullets did more damage to the roof than to the mice and rats, we decided we'd better quit and dig up a cat some place. So we rode down to the U2 ranch and talked it over with Nancy Morris; and of course, we came home with a beautiful little tigress which we adorned with the name of "Lillie."

Summer was well on its way, and with the cook stove going, the cabin would be a little too warm of an evening, so we used to open the window to the south. On the outside of this window, we had tacked up a piece of wire screen to keep the flies out, and

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the log sill made a dandy perch for "Lillie." It was cool there and a mountain breeze always sifted through. After her supper of biscuits and canned cow, "Lillie" invariably would seek her cozy corner on the window sill against the screen.

One evening George and I had finished supper, washed the dishes, loaded up our pipes and were enjoying the peace of God's country, when without the slightest warning, "Lillie" with a scream, leaped from the window sill, and ran wildly for a hiding place. Flashing our eyes to the window at the same instant, we saw a wild-eyed coyote tearing at the window screen, to get through at pussy. He had made a desperate lunge and only the screening had saved "Lillie's" bacon. We made a grab for our guns and dashed out of the door, but with the noise, the coyote's appetite for cat left him, and he disappeared in the shadows of the night.

## XX

### BILL GREENOUGH—MOUNTAIN RIDER

THE Greenough boys—Ben, Wright and Bill, were all mountain riders, cowboys, packers and hunters. They all were real men who loved action, horses and the mountains. But perhaps Bill was the most picturesque of the three. When I first met him, he was running and trading in wild "broncs" near Red Lodge, Montana. He used old John Weaver's corrals, just north of town and ran his horses on the sunny slopes, south of Red Lodge. Most every day he'd "bring 'em" through town on a high lope, in a cloud of dust, and it was really a great sight to see that bunch of fifty to one hundred and fifty broncs come through town on a high lope with "Bill" sitting deep in his saddle, his sombrero curled back off his forehead, a smile and a curse on his lips, fanning the horses through with the end of his rope.

A year or so later "Bill," finding the Red Lodge country getting a bit too civilized to suit the long-

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ings of his wild spirit, departed to that land of romance, wilderness and inaccessibility—the Upper Clark's Fork Valley. Here among the grizzly bear, elk, deer and mountain sheep, Bill put in the balance of his short life. He trapped bear, shot bear, elk and deer, ran horses and a few cattle. His main means of livelihood was peddling wild meat to the sporting fraternity in Red Lodge forty-five miles away.

After September first Bill would start shooting elk and deer. He would kill enough to load up twenty-five or thirty pack ponies, and starting at daylight, would wind his way over the Van Dyke trail and drop down the steep mountain trail to Rock Creek and on down Rock Creek as evening drew her shadows, and he drifted into Red Lodge in the night. Then he'd put his ponies in a corral on the edge of town, and all night he would sell elk and deer meat for cash at twenty-five and fifty cents a pound, according to the choiceness of the cuts. When daylight came again, he was well up the trail towards his mountain fastness.

One October evening I was coming down out of the Hoodoo Mountains from an elk hunt. We had just passed Bear Tooth Lake, when our ponies pricked up their ears and I knew they had heard something. Soon, about a quarter of a mile ahead

of us, we heard a man singing a cowboy ballad, and then we heard the jangle of the bell mare's bell, and then the old white bell mare showed up in the moonlight, and like dancing shadows, pony after pony trotted by, their packs empty. Twenty-four of them we counted, and then came "Bill Greenough"—happy, hard-boiled, singing. One mountain man, hazing twenty-four pack ponies, along a dim mountain trail alone in the moonlight. It was a wonderful and romantic picture. It is burned deep in my memories of that wonderful country.

## XXI

### SHIPPING CATTLE

'LONG in September, the beef round-up took place. Every hill and coulee was ridden and the cattle driven out and down to some central place where the herd was held, and herded until the captain thought they were practically all gathered. Then the work of cutting out the different brands began. The best riders on the best cutting ponies were sent into the herd and the beef steers of each ranch were cut out and held by the riders of the respective ranches. A day of shipping was agreed on, and the cars ordered. Each outfit had counted their beef steers, cut back what they didn't want to ship and all were on the trail to the railroad.

Each day they drifted along easily, without heat or hurry, about twelve miles; camped for the night and at daybreak moved on again, rested a while each noon, then were on the trail again. On the morning of the third day the outfit that got started first would be at the stock yards at Red Lodge.

They put their cattle in the yards, and when the engine arrived to spot the car at the chutes, they loaded them on. Then their riders would ride out a-ways, and meet the next outfit coming along, and help corral its cattle. With the engine snorting and puffing and the noise of the freight cars jamming one against the other, the cattle would get quite panicky and try to stampede, but with plenty of good riders pressing them close in the direction of the corral gate they were soon corralled. Some of the boys would stay and help load, and others would dash off to help in the next bunch, and so it would go all morning, until maybe a half-dozen or more outfits had come in, loaded and filled up an entire train of fifteen or twenty cars. Then the owners would ride up to the depot, sign the livestock contracts, get a bite of lunch, and turning their ponies over to one of their riders, were ready to hit the long trail to the windy city.

Generally about six or eight men would go through with the cattle, unloading and reloading them at the stopping places en route, keeping them on their feet, seeing that they received proper food and water. The trip took about five or six days, counting the time they had to lay over at the feeding stations. During this trip the cowboys lived in the caboose along with the train crew. There was gen-



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erally only room for about four to sleep at the same time, and so they took turn-about at it. Some of the boys would stay up and watch the cattle; whenever a stop was made running along either side of the train with prod-poles, prodding up all animals that had laid down and were in danger of being tramped on, while another bunch would be taking their turn at "bedding down."

Eating en route except at feeding stations, was on the order of "catch-as-catch-can." At each divisional point, train crews and engines are changed and this gave the cowmen a chance to run into a short-order house, drink a cup of coffee or buy a half-dozen sandwiches and a pie, and beat it back to their happy home in the caboose.

I remember my first trip back with cattle in 1901. We had had our cars hayed (hay put in the feed racks on the side of the cars) and when we left Billings, we drew an engine of the vintage of 1880 with a wide smokestack that generated sparks like a pinwheel firecracker. Soon the train came to a jerky halt and the engineer whistled back—"train on fire,"—so we all piled out to see the first car next to the engine in flames. We beat it out with brooms and pails of water from the engine and started again, but with the hay sticking through the slats of every car, and with our engine throw-

ing a lovely shower of sparks over the whole train, we had the pleasure and excitement of fighting fire ten times the first night. The cattle were not seriously burned but about half a car was singed quite badly, and one old bull got so excited that he jumped clean through the car while it was going and was never seen again, dead or alive. Luckily, none of the other steers followed him and we nailed up the hole and so were saved quite a catastrophe.

On another trip east with cattle, we had to lay over at Glendive, Montana, on account of a bridge having been burned at Sentinel Butte. We unloaded at about eleven A.M., and were told to start loading out at eleven P.M. Glendive was quite an attractive cowtown in those days, and when it came time to load out, there were just three of us on hand. The rest of the boys were gloriously drunk in town. We had thirty carloads of steers in the yards, and it was pitch dark; and I had only a railroad man and one old Irish cowman to help me. It was *some* job, but it had to be done; so I put the railroad man at the chutes, got the old cowman to drive them up the alleys, and I, with an old oil lantern, cut the cattle out of the pens into the alleys, keeping the right brands with the right car numbers. One steer got excited at the chute door and dashing back up the alley, ran smack into the old cowman, who couldn't

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see him in the dark. It just about put the old man out of business; but he was a game old bird, and limped on through until the last car was loaded. We were sure about "all in" when we pulled out at two-thirty A.M., but we had put them aboard and were on our way, and so were content.

One night about ten-thirty, we were sitting around the stove in the caboose. The train was making around twenty-five miles an hour when the forward door of the caboose opened, and a poor shivering "Bo," in stocking feet, came cringing in. He said: "Boys, I'm about all in with the cold. I've been lying up in a hay box all day and I took my shoes off to rest my feet a bit, and they fell through the slats among the cattle. You can do what you want with me, but I couldn't stand the cold any longer."

The poor old devil! Who could be hard on such a human derelict? Not a bunch of cowboys. We told him not to worry, but to come up to the stove and get warm. We gave him a couple of sandwiches, and I staked him to a pair of overshoes for his feet. We told him not to worry about the train crew putting him off; that we would consider him one of us until we made Chicago. So he rode on through with us, and perhaps he brought us good luck; for we hit almost the top market price for the season.

## XXII

### MOUNTAIN LIONS COME TO CAMP

ONE cold, clear morning in April, 1902, I rolled out of my bunk, and pulling on my clothes went out in front of the cabin to have a look around. The snow was still three feet deep on the level, and I was wondering how our bunch of horses was making it out on the snow-covered hillsides. Especially was I concerned about the welfare of the colts, of which we had about seven.

Letting my eyes wander up and down the slopes, I saw our bunch of horses in the upper end of a coulee east of the cabin, acting in a restless and unnatural manner. I went into the cabin, got a hurried breakfast, ran down to the barn where I had my old cow-pony "Coyote," threw on the saddle and loped up the hillside to see what was wrong.

Getting near to the bunch, I saw a colt lying on its side dead, a large part of its left hind-quarter eaten out, and its leg hamstrung. First off I thought it was the work of wolves, but soon just outside of the tracks made by the horses, I saw the track of a

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mountain lion. Trailing this a-ways, I saw where it was joined by another. The tracks had been made but an hour or so before, so I thought I might get a shot at the lions before they hid themselves in the mountains.

I rode quickly back to the cabin, got my 45/70 carbine and a belt of ammunition, and swung in on the trail. I carried my carbine across my lap, all ready for business. The trail looked absolutely fresh. Side by side the lions had ambled along just east of the creek bottom. At every turn of the creek, I would slow up and look and listen, expecting to see them, but they were not in sight, and on their trail I went.

Just before reaching the high plateau between the East and West Rosebuds, they dipped into a deep brushy coulee, and I thought sure I had them. I got off old "Coyote," tied him to a bush, and slipped on down a ridge overlooking the coulee. I sneaked along carefully, every nerve and sense alert, my finger on the trigger, expecting them to burst out any minute. Towards the lower end of the coulee I saw where they had scrambled up the steep side, and had gone on up on the flat towards the mountains, so I went back to my pony, climbed on and broke my way up through the snowdrift to the big flat. Then I picked up the trail again, and saw

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that they had made straight for the quaking-asp patches at the base of the mountain.

The snow was getting deeper and deeper and it was just about all "Coyote" could do to wallow through. I knew then there was no chance to see the lions on the flat, for it was all visible to me, but there was just a chance that I might catch up with them in the brakes where the flat broke off towards the East Rosebud River. So I dug the spurs in, and "Coyote," with big lunges, crossed the flat to the edge of the steep brakes.

I peered over the edge cautiously, and there, about 400 yards away, I saw my blond twins. They seemed to be a bit apprehensive in their minds, for they were loping away with big, long leaps. At first I thought my best bet would be to run up to them on horseback, and I tried that for about fifty yards, but ran into drifts of snow that simply swamped my pony, so I quit him as I knew that my only chance was to get off and fill the air with lead. I guess I shot twenty times at those big yellow fellows, beating it off through the snow, but six hundred yard shooting at running mountain lions, half buried in the snow, was a bit uncertain, and luck was not with me that day. So I had to bid them *au revoir* as they rolled their tails around the corner of Black Butte.

## XXIII

### SOME COW PONIES OF PERSONALITY

OF the many cow ponies that we rode, a few seemed to have had real personalities; and their traits have stayed in my memory. They were Captain, Baldy, Crockett, Coyote, Prince, Fox, Ginger, Texas and Five Dollars.

Captain was a small, chunky sorrel, with long mane and tail. He took life easy whenever possible, but was full of devilment, and would "crow-hop" pretty nearly every time you crawled on him. He was a good rope pony, and good at all cow-work. We used him almost all the time as a picket pony, because he kept so fat on a picket rope.

Baldy was a thickset, big-boned pinto with a bald face, a good, strong, upstanding pony for riding the circle in that steep, rocky foothill country. He was not very fast, but he was there for all day, and he could climb hills like a bull-moose.

Crocket was a nice trim-built sorrel with a blazed face. He was one of the best cow ponies I ever



The Author on "Ginger"



Horace Mullendore, My Good Old Hunting Partner





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straddled. He had seen lots of work on the open range, and knew the game by heart. I remember well how one day I was holding herd on him, and it was long towards sundown. I was tired and sleepy—in fact was asleep, when like a bolt of lightning, of his own initiative, he tore out after a cow that had broken out of the herd. He nearly left me standing on my head, but I couldn't get sore at a pony that worked while you slept.

Coyote was a big, upstanding chestnut full of high life, and of them all stood nearest my heart. He was so full of zest and courage. He was good at all kinds of cow work—roping, cutting out, holding herd or riding the circle. I rode him more than any other pony. In the hot summer suns and cold blasts of winter I could always depend on getting back on Coyote. He and I swam icy rivers, crossed treacherous quicksands of the bad-land streams, sweated and thirsted on the alkali plains, enjoyed the beauty of sweet water and tall grass on the mountain meadows, and through it all we always loved each other, always trusted each other. I hope to meet him again on the starry ranges.

Prince was a large, big-boned grey with the strength of a moose, very easy-gaited, somewhat headstrong, but a good "all-round" cow pony.

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Even yet, I can feel his beautifully muscled body climbing up the steep slants of our foothills, and remember the zest with which he would bring the ponies down from the hillsides to the corral gate. I rode him on our trip to and through Yellowstone Park and he was "up and a-coming" all the way. Later on he got blind in his left eye. I remember how he loved to try and dodge out of the corral if he had half a chance, and believe me, you did not want to try and head him off, for he would not turn for anybody. All of which I learned by being spun around and nearly killed when old Prince decided to go out one time.

Fox was a heavy-boned, thick-set sorrel and his name suited him well, for he was sure foxy. One morning I put a new saddle on him that had attached to it a beautiful pair of white Angora saddle pockets. Fox did not seem to notice the new rig until I got up on the flat behind our barn and hit into a lope, then the Angora flaps began to flap. Fox took one look, and lost his head, and started, high, wide and handsome, straight for a cut bank, twenty feet down to the creek bottom. I stuck him for three or four jumps, and then I saw he really was going over the bank, and I would sure be killed if I went along, so I threw my left leg over his head and tried to land on my feet, but didn't quite get the

## Some Cow Ponies of Personality 81

right slant to it, and lit on my right hip, which laid me up for about ten days. Fox went on over, turned a somersault or two, and lit in the creek with a grunt. He finally got to his feet, and staggered up on the flat again. As I was out of the play for a while, George caught him and led him back to the barn. The next time I was able to get on him, we let Fox smell the flaps, flapped them up and down a few times and after a bit he got so he wouldn't pitch at sight of them, but I never took very many chances with that little gentleman, for he was liable to "go to it" any time that things didn't just suit him. . . . You couldn't ride Fox down. I've seen him go fifty and sixty miles a day right along, and come in high-headed and foxy as ever.

Ginger was a dark chestnut Cayuse that I bought as a three-year old. He was only about half broken and I sure had a time making a good horse out of him. I remember one cold morning I wanted to ride down to the stage station after our mail, and I ran in the horse bunch and put my string on Ginger. I put the saddle on nice and easy, and led him out to a level spot, and started to crawl on him. Before I got half on, he had lost his head, and started pitching straight for the brush and the creek. I ducked my head, held the horn, and managed to hang on as he tore through the willows. Then I straightened

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up, got mad and went to riding, and I was all in when the battle was over. For over an hour, off and on, we had it, all the way down to the stage station; then, he, too, seemed to have had enough, and came home like a gentleman.

Ginger was a mighty good pony, tough as nails, could run like a deer and was very easy riding. He got to be a good all-round cow pony, and also did well on hunting trips in the mountains.

Little Old Texas I bought as a four-year-old from John Weaver at Red Lodge. He was a bay, quite small, with a mean look in his eye. He *was* a little devil for a while, and stubborn as a mule. Morning after morning, when I would start out on the circle, he would refuse to go. He'd balk and turn around and rear and try to roll. I made up my mind that it was either he or me, and I'd get out my quirt and we'd have a battle royal for a half hour or so. Then he'd straighten out and do his thirty, forty or fifty miles like an old timer.

I remember one time my old hunting pard, Horace Mullendore, was riding "Tex," and wanted to bring his bed roll from the wagon up to my cabin so he laid it in front of him on Tex, and started for the cabin. Well, all went well for a spell, until my horse broke out in a trot, and Tex wanted to stay along. Right *pronto* he decided to shed the

## Some Cow Ponies of Personality 83

bed; and lowering his head between his legs, lit into the prettiest piece of "sun-fishing" you ever put your eyes on. Horace was a game old scout, and he tried to stay, bed and all, but about the fourth jump he decided that if he wanted to stay on himself, he had to shed the bed, and so he let the bed roll off, and buckled down to do some real riding. He rode him out and then we went back and got the bed and I took it up on my horse and we came in all right. Horace and I always have a good laugh when we think of little old "Tex," and the bedding race.

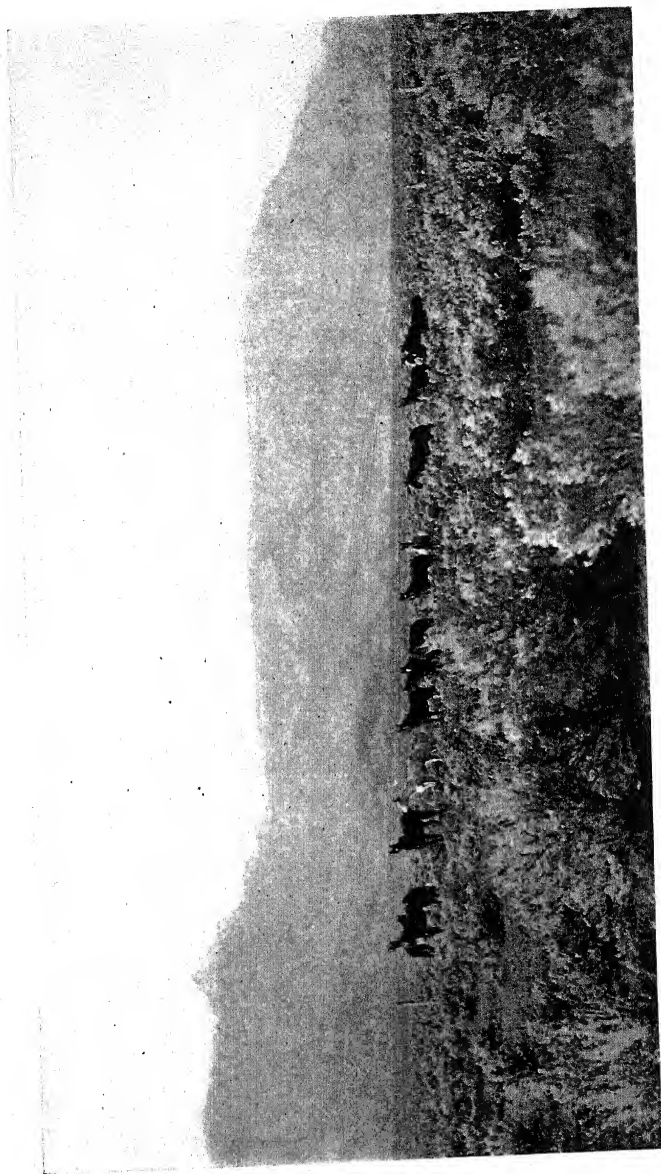
Tex acted a little balky toward men who rode him, but was kind and safe for the kiddies. They all took a ride on him in all ways and manners, even to standing up on him bareback, and he always played square with them.

Old "Five Dollars" was a big flea-bitten grey. I bought him on the road to Red Lodge from a fellow I met coming out that was broke, and had to have some cash right away. He said he wanted sixty dollars for him, and he and I argued for an hour before I got him to come down five dollars. But I finally bought him for fifty-five, put my rope on him and led him along in, leaving my friend sitting on the roadside with his saddle and bridle and blanket waiting for the mail stage to carry him on

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out. I forgot to ask the fellow the name of the horse, and so took the Indian method of naming him after the first thing that occurred after I got him. Talking so long for a reduction of five dollars stuck in my mind, and I called him "Five Dollars."

Old Five was the best horse I ever rode in the mountains. He was sure-footed and strong, with a very fast walk. I could shoot off his back, and even pack a bear on him.



Pack Ponies in the Sage Brush





## XXIV

### SHERIFF POTTER AND I HUNT CATTLE THIEVES IN THE MOONLIGHT

SHERIFF POTTER was a real personality. He was known from one end of Montana to the other. He was of a high-strung, nervous temperament, keen, active and as lithe as a cat. Wherever he was, he believed in having something going on. He'd joke and josh continuously with everybody and he knew stories without end. He seemed to sense the humor of every situation. When he arrived in town, the town was immediately brought to life and the inhabitants all knew that "Old Potter" had blown in. His voice had a good carrying quality. One could hear him for half a mile "telling it," and laughing. He was a good shot, unafraid and quick as lightning. His only failing was his uncontrollable sociability. He simply had to "tell it" to everybody.

'Long about calving time one spring, some other outfits and ours had some cattle down in the bad

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lands near Bear Creek. We noticed a scarcity of calves, and also observed that many cows seemed to have lost their calves. Then we learned that some strangers had been selling fresh veal at the mining camps of Bear Creek and Washoe. So Potter was put on the trail, and he asked me to go along as his deputy. We had a "short-order house-beefsteak-supper" at Red Lodge at about eleven-thirty each night, and then slipped over to Potter's corral, got our ponies and guns, and rode quietly out in the darkness. The moon was up, and that helped a lot to get around steep coulees. We would cache our ponies in some brush in the gulch, and then crawl up on top of some nearby knoll, and watch and listen.

We believed the "rustlers" were killing the calves by shooting them between the eyes with a twenty-two rifle, then throwing them up on pack ponies and riding away with them. So we figured that we ought to see the flash of a rifle or hear the report. We would stay an hour or so on each knoll and then not hearing or seeing anything, we would get our ponies and riding always below the sky line move on a mile or so to some other point.

I sure was having a wonderful time; every moment I felt we would see the flash or hear a shot that would mean real action, pronto!

For ten nights we did this, staying out till just before sun up, but somehow, nothing occurred and no more calves "turned up missing." Somebody must have put the cattle thieves wise that Potter was on the trail.



## THE HUNTING TRAIL



## THE HUNTING TRAIL

### I

#### MY FIRST SIGHT OF BIG GAME

BEN BROWN, who rode for the U2 outfit, rode up to our camp one October afternoon with a 30-30 tied on his saddle and said he was going up to the foothills to get some deer meat, and wanted me to go along. I hadn't got around to big game hunting as yet, and did not have anything to hunt with except my Colt-45, but I wanted to learn something about big game hunting and so I buckled on the old 45, saddled up and went along.

We rode in and out all the aspen patches at the upper end of our pastures, where there were plenty of white-tail, but failed to see or jump any. So we rode on up to the big flat clear to the foot of the mountains, carefully watching all the salt licks and pond holes where the deer came out to drink of an evening. Nothing stirring there, we started up through the burnt timber at the base of Black Butte,



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thinking perhaps to jump a bunch of black-tail. Suddenly, down below us, we heard rocks rolling and the thud of animal feet running. We located the sound and riding out on a little point, right under us we saw a bunch of half a dozen bighorn sheep travelling up through a draw. In a second we unlimbered our artillery and turned loose. Between the two of us, but mostly to the account of Ben's 30-30 we dropped a small ram, with horns that measured about twelve inches at the base. I didn't know anything about the size of game heads at that time. All I knew was that we had seen and killed real wild game and I was thrilled. We got our ponies, led them over to our meat, and after cleaning it, put it up behind "Baldy," my pony, and we rode back to our camp.

George Hoffman was out on the woodpile, when we rode in, and when he saw fresh meat coming in, he got excited and jubilant, and smacked his lips in anticipation of ram steak.

## II

### QUICK SHOOTING SAVES OUR LIVES

ONE November snow fell a foot and a half deep on the level, and in the mountains much deeper. Guy Jenkins and I had been camping at the DK ranch during the storms, and when it broke, we were kind of restless, from sitting around for three days, and we decided to strap on our artillery and pull up the East Rosebud Cañon with the chance of getting a deer or two. Getting up in the cañon above old Tommy Jones' camp, we saw a few white-tail tracks, so we tied up our ponies and traileed them up the mountain and jumped a buck, an old doe and a yearling. We opened up on the buck and three shots ended his career. We cleaned him, and grabbing a hind leg dragged him down to the foot of the hillside, tied a handkerchief on him to prove ownership, and left him there until we should come back.

Remounting, we continued on up the cañon wallowing in two feet of snow; we saw many tracks

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of white-tail going in and out of the brushy bottoms. Looking across the river, we noticed some tracks going straight up the steep mountain side, and disappearing in a box cañon. These looked interesting and so, tying up our ponies again, we crossed the Rosebud on the ice. Always watching for anything to move on the mountain side, we climbed up to the tracks. First off we thought they were young elk. There were three tracks in all. We trailed them up the steep side of the mountain to the sheer walls of rock and there the two largest tracks veered off to the right, and a smaller one went back up the cañon.

We took up the trail of the two large tracks and followed them along the foot of the cliff. We were almost sure by this time that we were following a couple of rams. Where they went and what they nibbled at showed that. The tracks on account of the deep, loose snow showed but little. Finally they climbed up on a long shelf of rock that ran clear around the south side of Black Butte. When they got on the shelf, we were barely able to climb up, and as the shelf bore to the north, it became very precipitous, and not over five feet wide. Several hundred yards further along, and we were high up on the steep side of the mountain on a five foot shelf with a sheer drop of hundreds of feet to the

## Quick Shooting Saves Our Lives 95

cañon below. We whispered to each other that we must be ready to shoot at a minute's notice, for it was quite possible that the shelf would suddenly end. In that event the sheep would be in a life or death predicament, and would spare nothing in their dash for life.

This thought had barely passed through our minds, and we had just time to get our rifles cocked, when a few hundred feet ahead, we heard the sheep coming at full speed. Luckily the shelf was straight for a hundred and fifty feet in front of us. But we had only one hundred and fifty feet in which to decide whether we should die, or the rams; for there was not room on that shelf of rock for two wild rams to pass us. In just a second, they had rounded a rocky point, and with lowered heads, were rushing upon us.

Bang! Bang! Bang! our rifles roared. One ram went down, the other was upon us. It seemed as if both of us would be pushed off the cliff. We reloaded and shot as fast as we could and the ram crashed down dead at our very feet. We were safe, but sweating and panting with excitement. We went on ahead to where the first ram dropped, saw he was stone dead, and then continued on the shelf for about two hundred feet further and saw where it stopped at a sheer wall. They had had to turn

## 96 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

back, knowing they were trapped. (Their horns measured  $13\frac{1}{2}$  and 15 inches, respectively, at the base.) We came back, slid the rams down the mountain, went back to where our ponies were, and led them down to where the rams lay. Putting a ram on each, we led them down towards where the white-tail buck was left, and put it up on Jenkins' horse and rambled on down the trail towards the DK Ranch.

Glancing up on the hillside on the south slopes of the cañon we saw feeding on the top of a grassy knoll, a bunch of five big black-tail deer. In the bunch was a most kingly looking buck, with large antlers. In fact, we both thought they were elk, they looked so large. We did not really need more meat, but we were young, and winter was coming on, and we knew that not a pound of it would be wasted. What is more, that big head of horns appealed to us. So carefully edging our way back into a bunch of willows, we tied up our ponies, took down our shooting irons, and getting the wind in our faces, started slowly climbing up towards our quarry.

It was a hard sneak to make, for we had a scant amount of brush to get behind and the black-tail really were in plain sight. We decided to try for the big buck. Just as we emerged from the scattered

## Quick Shooting Saves Our Lives 97

pinetrees in the gulch, we saw him quickly raise his big head, throw it around in our direction, and we knew it was now or never, so the 45/70 of mine, and the 30/40 of Guy's went into action. The big buck made a couple of quick jumps and disappeared over the top of the knoll. We both felt sure we had put lead in him. With our tongues hanging out, and our hearts beating hard, we ran up over the hill to see the big one down for the last time in the coulee below us. The others made a pretty sight loping off through the deep snow for the high mountains; silhouetted on the sunny sky line. Running down to where the buck lay, we found him to be one of the largest black-tails we had ever seen alive or mounted.

It's funny how things work out sometimes. The DK ranch had run out of meat about a week previous, and so Dan Kaufman, Alfred "Nick" and two other boys decided to get together a pack outfit, and hit out for Slough Creek—about seventy-five miles to the west—to get some game. In the meantime, Guy and I had to lay over at the Kaufman's ranch (DK outfit) on account of a bad storm, and as described above, we went out and got two rams—one black- and one white-tail buck, virtually within sight of the ranch house, and the other boys, who had pretty nearly perished on their trip to

## 98 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

Slough Creek, came staggering home without a sign of game.

They felt a bit peeved when they saw all the game we had hung up; but they were glad to have gotten out of the high mountains alive, and also were well satisfied to put their teeth into some mountain ram.

### III

#### I KILL A BIGHORN IN THE BIGHORNS

WE had made our beef round-up and had seen our cattle loaded on the cars and started for their last long trail, from Red Lodge to Chicago, when the call of the hunting trail became loud within me. We rode back to the ranch, and on our way stopped at Tim George's road ranch, where we got our mail. I received a letter from my friend, Walter C. Janney, who was ranching it with Milo Burke at Ten Sleep, Wyoming. He said to roll my bed and come along, that Milo was getting up a big game hunt for deer and elk in the Bighorns, back of their ranch, and figured to start in about four days' time. I could hardly make it by that time, going overland from the ranch, so I decided to take the train from Red Lodge to Sheridan, and go there by stage coach. This I did, and pulled into the Bar X ranch about supper time a day before I was due. Walt was in his cabin washing up, and



## 100 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

when he heard the old coach rattle, he came out to welcome me, still wet from his ablutions.

We were a happy bunch that October evening at the Bar X; besides Walt and myself there were two other chaps, one from St. Joseph, Missouri, by the name of Bud Motter, and another chap by the name of Vandermere, from Pennsylvania some place. We also expected two more gentlemen from Omaha to come any day—a Mr. Victor Cauldwell, and a doctor, whose name I can't recall.

Next day Milo sent Walt and me to the hills to gather in a bunch of pack ponies. It took us several days before we found them all—they were certainly scattered some, and the country was strictly on the box cañon order, which made it tough going to get them out.

We were still waiting for the two gentlemen from Omaha, who were for some reason delayed. We waited almost a week overtime, when Milo said we would pack up and hit the trail, and he would have one of the boys at the ranch bring the Omaha gentlemen into camp. So next morning we left the Bar X, Milo at the head on his favorite black cow pony, "Satan." We camped the first night in a sagebrush gulch, the next night at the edge of the tall timber, and the third night we made our permanent camp in a pretty park surrounded by timber, but well up



My Bighorn from the Bighorns



Stage Coach on the Crazy Woman Trail



## I Kill a Bighorn in the Bighorns 101

near timber-line. We expected to hunt deer and elk, with a chance of killing a bear or a ram. The second night out it had snowed, and we had now about eight inches of good tracking snow.

The following morning Milo was up about 3 A.M., and in a little while he bawled out, "Roll out, you lazy roosters; here's tea for the grannies and coffee for the toughs." We soon had put away a good substantial breakfast and had strung out, each in a different direction, to the high country.

I expected to see deer and elk on every hillside, but after travelling until 2 P.M. without seeing a thing but fresh tracks, I changed my mind and realized that there was a whole lot I did not know about the game. I had been hunting the low hillsides; now I decided to pull on up to the high plateau country and see what things looked like up there.

I had hardly gotten well started when I jumped about a dozen black-tail deer. They were about 400 yards away, and took a diagonal course for the plateau above them. I crawled up to the top of the "bench" and tried to run around and head them off before they gained the top. I almost accomplished this task, when I heard "thump, thump, thumpity, thump" behind me, and turning around I saw what then was a great sight to me—about fifteen black-tail deer—one right back of the other

## 102 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

bouncing across the plateau. There were about five fine bucks leading; then the does, yearlings and calves. They were fully four hundred yards off, then, and I just had a feeling that if I could turn loose enough lead I would surely down something, so I cocked my little .45/70 carbine, held good and high, and cut her loose! My bullet struck away low; the next one was warm—very warm—and with the third I dropped a yearling buck. He seemed to be dead, so after trying a shot or two more at the rest of the bunch, I walked on up towards my deer. I was sure some proud boy, all right. I had gotten half way, when my buck got on his feet and was making a fine getaway. I was plumb non-plussed for a minute, but finally gathered myself, took a knee-rest and broke him down again. I then ran right up close to him, and once more he got up, but this time I was near enough to put him properly to sleep. I was about three miles from camp, and it was getting dark, so I made up my mind to pack him in whole. I was so proud to get a deer that the packing of him in did not worry me much. Well, I was the only one who brought meat to camp. Vandermere said he saw a fine buck only a hundred yards off, but failed to connect. He was very much excited about it, and kept reiterating the fact that the reason he missed him was that he had aimed at

## I Kill a Bighorn in the Bighorns 103

the animal as a whole instead of getting a bead on his heart. This sure did amuse Burke some; his eyes would just sparkle with merriment, and then he would get Van to repeat the story.

The next day Walter and I decided to hunt together—he was going to show me where there was a bunch of elk, so he and I hit up country. Cauldwell and the Doctor, who were now in camp, took down the creek, and Van and Motter pulled out in a northerly direction.

We had gone about a mile up the creek, when we saw where a lion had crossed and taken a ridge, bearing off in a southerly direction. The trail was pretty fresh, so we decided we would follow it a ways just to see where it would head to. We were now up about timber-line and could see the trail cross a cañon and go on higher up; as it was travelling in the direction we wished to go, we stayed along with it. It was now past noon, and we stopped and ate our bite of lunch. It was getting colder and stormier each minute—soon it started to snow, and by two o'clock it was a regular blizzard. We had not seen an elk track, and knowing the uselessness of following the lion, we decided to work back in the direction of camp. We had travelled only about half way down the ridge we were on when we saw a single track of something going up the draw at the

## 104 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

foot of the ridge. We soon were up to it, and Walt said, "It's either a small bull elk or a big ram." Well, believe me, I pricked up my ears some when he said it might be a ram. I sure wanted a ram, and wanted him badly. After we had trailed it a little ways, Walt said he felt sure it was a ram. A little further on we found some droppings, and then we knew for sure. The trail led up the opposite ridge, and then up, up, up to the barest pinnacles. The weather was fierce now, blowing a gale, and the fine snow cut like a knife. It was getting dark; camp called a man strongly, but stronger still was the call of the old ram up there somewhere among the icy pinnacles.

We kept on and on; it seemed an endless trail, when suddenly on reaching a little plateau at the apex of one of the highest ridges, we saw his lordship, the Bighorn of the Rockies, one of the grandest animals that roams the mountains; he had lain down with his back to the storm and was chewing away absolutely unconcerned. I wanted that ram very badly, and so did Walt, but as he had invited me to come along and had made the trip so pleasant for me, I told him to go ahead and kill it. He was shooting a .30-30 carbine, and in a second had it lined up on old Mr. Ram. At the crack of the gun, instead of rolling over dead, it sprang up, shook

## I Kill a Bighorn in the Bighorns 105

its head and dashed for a cliff not seventy-five yards away. I was so sure I would have no part in his execution that I had not even cocked my rifle, and it took me several seconds before I got in action, and taking a snap shot I broke his left hind leg (high up near the hip), just as he was disappearing over a very steep ledge. He went on over and disappeared. We dashed up to the edge, and peering over, saw him lying stunned on a ledge about fifty yards below us. I then finished him with another shot.

We had the ram all right, now, but the question to decide was, who killed him, and whom he belonged to. Walt swore he could not have missed him, but I was equally sure that he had not drawn any blood, so we went back on the trail and saw the first blood sign where I had broken his leg. Between there and where the ram had laid there was not a drop. It was hard for Walt to believe it, but on arriving at the spot where the ram had lain, we found a large splinter of horn, freshly splintered; then we knew where his bullet had gone. He looked at his rifle and found that his sights had been raised for a 250 yard shot, and he had forgotten to lower them. As the ram was only about a hundred yards off, he was bound to overshoot. He felt powerfully blue, but soon got over it and gave me his hand, congratulating me on getting the king of them all. Was I



## 106 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

tickled? Well, I guess yes. We scrambled down to where he lay, and thereupon had another round of congratulations, for he was sure an old-timer. His horns measured  $16\frac{1}{2}$  inches at the base, and his body seemed as big as a two-year-old steer. We cut off his head and then his hindquarters. Using both our belts, I strapped his head to my shoulder, took a rifle in each hand, and Walt fought it out with the hindquarters. It was some fight, though. We left them at the creek bottom and went on into camp with the head strapped to my shoulders. On arriving at camp we saw that all the boys were in, so we decided not to say anything about the ram until somebody spied it on my back, so we both swung into camp in the most unconcerned manner. None of the boys had seen anything and asked us if we had. We told them we had seen a lion track, but not an elk or a deer. We had all stood about the fire several minutes, when Milo came over from his cooking fire and spotted the belts on my shoulder. Then he looked at Walt and saw blood stains on his jumper. He said: "Turn around, Mack, and show the boys what real hunters can do." Well, believe me, some eyes popped for the next few minutes, and the questions came thick and fast. "Where did you get him?"—"Who shot him?"—"How far away was he?"—"Were there any others with him?"

## I Kill a Bighorn in the Bighorns 107

etc. I don't think I fully appreciated that ram until I had seen how envious the rest of the boys were at my tenderfoot luck.

It set in storming pretty hard now, and after staying with it for about ten days, and seeing no game, we decided to go on to the ranch. I sure was some proud boy going home with the head of that grand old ram.

## IV

### JANNEY AND I HUNT ELK IN THE HOODOOS

ONE September my good friend, Walter Janney, having imbibed the spirit of the wanderlust, had pulled out from his ranch on Ten Sleep Creek on the western slopes of the Bighorns, and with a couple of pack ponies had made a big circle through the Shoshone mountains, up through Yellowstone Park and then around the north end of the Bear Teeth around to my cow-camp on Willow Creek between the Rosebud Rivers. We were riding in the foothills after our beef steers at the time and he joined right in and worked like an old hand.

One afternoon, while riding up in the Black Cañon country, we saw a black bear sitting on a big shelf of rocks a little way up the mountain side. He was right out in plain sight and had seen us, so we knew we had no chance to do anything with our six pistols.

Well, Walt wanted to get that bear badly, and he said if I'd ride herd on Mr. Bear, he'd do a Paul

Revere to the cabin and get a couple of rifles. I said I didn't think the bear would stay in sight for two hours, but if he wanted to try "to fly at it" and I would do my best to entertain Bruin in the meantime.

Well, that bear must have been a female of the species, for it was the most curious animal I ever met up with. Every now and then it would get up and start off up the mountain side. Then I would yell a bit, and wave my hat, and act foolish and every time the bear would stop and come back and look. We kept this performance going for two solid hours until Janney and Guy Jenkins got back with rifles and ammunition enough to kill a dozen bears.

There wasn't a chance in the world of getting near enough to the bear for a real good shot, for it was out on a perfectly bald hillside and was watching our every move. So we decided the best bet would be to start riding off down the flat as if we were going to leave it and then suddenly swerve in a circle at full speed, get as near to it as we could, get off our ponies and proceed to fill the air with lead.

Well, we sure unlimbered quite a supply of lead, but I don't think anything worse than dirt and stones hit the bear. Guy Jenkins swore he had wounded him and kept after him till dark came on, but never saw him again.

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We finished gathering the beef, took them to the railroad at Red Lodge, came back to our camp and then decided to get in a few pack ponies and hit out for the Hoodoo mountains after elk (Wapiti).

I used old Captain and Texas for my pack ponies and Walt had one of his own. I rode Coyote and Walt a big rangy bay that I have forgotten the name of.

We made Red Lodge the first night and camped in John Weaver's corral. That evening, going about town, we met a fellow who lived up in the Upper Clark's Fork country by the name of Jack McNutt—commonly and truthfully called "Nutty Jack." He was just about ready to hit the trail back to his home and as he was quite a good packer, cook and hunter and knew the country where we were headed for, we decided to take him along. Jack was glad to earn a few extra dollars, as he was raising quite a large family up there in the tall timber, and it took real money to feed 'em all. He was a fine fellow to be out in the hills with, for he was always good-natured, and was there with a joke and a smile, no matter how things broke.

Next morning we packed up early and hit it up Rock Creek. We camped that night at "Mirror Lake" about twenty-five miles south of Red Lodge, on a high plateau at the foot of the famous Van

Dyke trail. We had a nice camp—finest of water, plenty of grass and lots of dry pitch snags for firewood. We hobbled all the pack ponies, and kept our saddle ponies on a picket rope. The night was fine and we did not bother with a tent and enjoyed watching the stars as we fell asleep.

In the morning we got breakfast, packed our ponies good and tight and were ready to navigate the steep slants of the Van Dyke trail. Some of the time we rode, sometimes we led, and other times we walked behind holding on to our ponies' tails.

This trail is in slide rock, most of the way, and is long and steep. It climbs clear up to the top of the mountain rim and then, circling Mirror Lake basin to the south, it crosses the Rock Creek divide and drops down to the Upper Clark's Fork country.

The third night we camped in a grassy meadow near the Bear Tooth Lake trail. We killed and ate a rabbit for supper and the next afternoon when we crawled down the steep cañon trail to Lewis' cabin on the Clark's Fork River, I began to feel sick, and believe me, for two days I was some sick boy! I laid it to the rabbit—some way or other it did not taste just right when I ate it. But Joe was a mighty good doctor, having run a drug store at Red Lodge, and he fixed me up some pills and on the third day, I was ready to ramble on again.

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Jack McNutt had added a couple of broncs to our pack outfit, and when we were crawling up the steep part of the Papoose Creek trail, a bronc's pack slipped and he then helped it to slip some more, and when we found him piled up half way down the side of the mountain, he was about all in and could no longer walk, having strained his hip badly.

We unpacked him and seeing he was no longer of any service, turned him loose. This put us in kind of bad, as we needed every horse we had to pack our outfit and the heads we aimed to get, so Jack told us to make camp right on the trail where we were, and to stay there until he made a ride of sixty miles (round trip) to his ranch after a gentle pack horse.

Jack pulled out down the steep mountain and Walt and I unpacked and camped for the night at the foot of a big tree. The weather was getting quite cold and the wind blew hard all night. There was plenty of bunch grass on the south slopes for our ponies, which we turned loose (hobbled) keeping our riding ponies on ropes, as usual. We rigged up a small tepee out of a tarpaulin and building a fire in front between it and the big tree, we slept pretty well. We knew Jack would not show up until about supper time next day, so we slept late

and took the whole day easy, talking and smoking and wondering how we would find the elk. We had supper ready and things all fixed up for another night, when we heard Jack coming up the trail singing. He had a gentle pack horse with him, and we were soon content again, knowing that our outfit was once more ready to go.

At daybreak next morning, we wrangled the ponies, cooked breakfast, and, packing up, climbed on up over the Hoodoo divide. Swinging north along the divide, we decided to camp at Canoe Lake, a tributary to Miller Creek. We had seen lots of fresh sign of elk and deer and we knew we were "among 'em." We made permanent camp here, and next morning were ready to go out and get one. Janney wanted to hunt alone and said he would pull off in the direction of the Cache Creek divide, hunting the high basins that lay along the rim. So Jack and I, about an hour later, slipped off in a southerly direction to hunt the more heavily wooded and burnt timber country to the south.

Working our way slowly down the gulches, we saw numerous bands of elk, some of small number, some comprising thirty or more animals. We saw a few pretty good heads, but none that satisfied me. I wanted a real one, or none at all. In one little park we witnessed a battle royal between two fair-sized



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bulls, and we lay prone and watched for about fifteen minutes while they rammed and twisted and turned to horn each other. Sometimes they would rear straight up on their hind legs and strike at each other with their fore-feet. Finally the largest bull came out victor, and we slipped quietly off down the country. In many directions we could hear the bulls bugling, and watching carefully and always getting the wind in our favor, we would sneak up to where we could look them over and see what kind of horns they bore.

Suddenly Jack caught sight of a big bull coming down through the timber in a direction that would make him pass about sixty yards in front of us. He whispered to me excitedly: "Watch out, Mack, here comes a real one." I cocked my 50/110 and, standing plumb still beside a bunch of bushes, I was ready, and just as that grand animal trotted out on a little park, I planted a 300-grain-fifty right behind his left fore-shoulder. He was only about sixty yards away and we could see just where the bullet had hit. The big bull stopped suddenly as if paralyzed and stood transfixed, his head held high and his right fore-foot drawn up towards his body, like a dog pointing. He stood like this for fully two minutes. I did not know just how the game would break and wanted to shoot again, fearing he



It Was a Dandy Head



might get away, but Jack had seen many act that way and told me not to worry, that he was mine. I had put in a fatal shot, and that he did not need any more. Jack was right, for suddenly the bull reared up and fell over dead.

We ran up to him and rejoiced to find that he had an exceptionally large head. He had only six points on each side, but the size of the beam was tremendous and the spread was the largest killed in that country in years. I was tickled to death with my luck, as I had got a far better head than I had ever dreamed of. We cut off the head, peeled the scalp, and hung up the meat, all of which we left till the morrow, when we could come for it with a pack pony.

Jack and I sat down by a small stream and enjoyed our snack of lunch, and told each other how lucky we were to get a real record head. Then we slowly drifted back towards our camp at Canoe Lake. Not walking with any particular care, we jumped quite a few bunches of elk and some deer. We built up a fire and got supper in shape and waited for Janney to show up. The sun went down below the horizon and darkness crept over our camp and still no sign of Walter. We wondered and figured out all sorts of possible situations that could have happened which would keep him out possibly

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all night. But it was bitter cold and quite a bad wind blowing. We knew that he would not "siwash" it unless he simply had to. We fired shots, but heard no answer. Bedtime came and still no Walt. We kept a big blazing fire going, so he could locate camp if he was anywhere near, but to no avail. So we finally rolled up in our blankets to await the fate of another day.

We made up our minds to have a late breakfast in the hope that our lost comrade would be in and join us, but we finished eating and had washed our dishes before we heard a "wolf yell" and turned and saw our lost one, without much spirit, slowly coming through the timber. We quickly made coffee and fried meat and then Walt told us of how he had killed a nice five point bull a long ways from camp; how he had to trail it a long ways after the first shot and how he finally finished it, and starting home some way, could not locate the basin our camp was in. He climbed up on the rim and looked and thought, but to no avail. Night had come on and he realized he must be much farther away than he figured, so he decided he must "siwash" and went down to a creek bottom, gathered up a lot of squaw wood and starting a fire up against a big tree root had "put in" a rather uncomfortable night. He sure was hungry for he had taken no lunch with him the

day before and had walked about twenty miles or more over the roughest kind of country. He said: "You boys can do what you damn please today, but here's one gent that's going to have the happiest sort of a time eating and sleeping."

So leaving Walt to the pure contentment of hot coffee, meat, bacon and biscuits and plenty of blankets, Jack and I saddled up our riding ponies and taking two pack ponies along, slipped on down to where we left our big bull and brought him back to camp. Walt had freshened up quite a bit by then, and when he saw the size of the horns, he became plumb enthusiastic and said: "I guess I'll have to go out and kill another, for mine is just a calf alongside of yours."

We removed the scalp, cleaned up the head, and soon another day was gone.

Next day, we all rode out to where Walt's bull lay and found it to be a very nice five point bull of moderate size, but of nice conformity. He said he really did not want too big a head, for he had no place to put it in his house, and really was satisfied with what he got, so the next day we took the back trail and in four days, were back at our cow-camp riding line.

## V

### ED VAN DYKE AND I GO OUT TO KILL A WAGONLOAD OF GRIZZLIES

WHILE in the Upper Clark's Fork country, the fall previous to our elk hunt, I had heard of a great hunter who lived up there by the name of Ed Van Dyke. They all acknowledged him to be the greatest hunter of big game in those parts. In fact, he had taken out many celebrities from the big cities of the East, and also some titled gentlemen from foreign lands. I was very much interested in this man and decided, if possible, to go out with him after grizzlies the following spring.

I happened to meet Ed in Red Lodge the following April, and although subconsciously I felt he was not just right, I decided to take a whirl with him and see just what he did know about big game hunting. So I said to him: "Ed, can a man go up with you and have a good chance of killing a bear or two?" He smiled that elusive smile of his and his eyes twinkled: "Why, Doctor," he replied (he

had honored me by the name of Doctor), "you come up with me in May, and we'll go out and kill a wagonload of grizzlies."

I knew he was something of a humorist and also that he could "sure spread it" when his thoughts turned to big game. But still those who knew him persisted in upholding him as a mighty hunter. As I had nothing particular to do until the calf round-up in June, I told Ed to look for me at his cabin on Wolf Creek along about May first, and for him to get some kid to come along and cook and wrangle horses for us.

I left our cow-camp on Willow Creek between the Rosebuds along about the twenty-fifth of April with two pack ponies, leaving Guy Jenkins to take care of things. I stayed in Red Lodge a day or two buying grub and also waiting for Joe Lewis (Joe Bush) who was figuring to go up to his ranch in the Clark's Fork basin about seven miles this side of Van Dyke's. Joe also had a pack train of grub along to feed his crew during the short summer months.

We got up early on the morning of the twenty-eighth, packed up and were on the trail by seven o'clock. We had barely left town when a baby blizzard set down upon us and we had to slip into our mackinaws and take it for about an hour. Then



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it broke and the sun came out and everything was "Jake" once more.

We moved on up the Rock Creek trail past the Old Dunn and Dilworth Ranch, and waved to John and Doc as we went by, and slowly we wended our way up to the Mirror Lake basin, where we camped for the night.

I gathered some of the local opinion regarding Van Dyke from Joe, and it seemed that while he surely was a real hunter, he was a little eccentric, and a bit slippery.

On the afternoon of the second day out I said "Adios" to Joe Lewis and bore off to the west to hit Van Dyke's camp on Wolf Creek. As the sun was sinking in its glory behind the myriad of mountain peaks, I forded Wolf Creek and riding through a grove of quaking aspens, came suddenly upon that marvelous creation, Ed Van Dyke's home camp. Ed had married the daughter of Old Man Kaple, and she had borne him two girls—then in some unknown manner, she had passed on, leaving two little girls for Ed to bring up.

I have visited the catacombs of Rome and I've been in many junk shops, but his camp (log cabin) was a mixture of both. It was only twelve by fourteen feet in size. To the left of the door, as you entered, was a small dilapidated sheet-iron cook

stove. In the northeast corner was a large wooden double bed, in which they all slept, and hanging from the ceiling between the bed and the door, was so much junk of all kinds (pack saddles—steel traps—old deer and elk hides—bits of harness—snowshoes—sacks of beans and oatmeal, etc., etc.) that one could not see the bed from the door. He had but few cooking utensils and very little to eat. He was a great drinker of tea and that and a little stewed oatmeal and fried meat made up his menu.

Clarence Gilbert, a boy who lived on the Cook City trail, pulled in early next day and we packed up about half a dozen pack ponies and Ed, having taken his little girls down the river to his mother-in-law's cabin, we were all set to hit for the hills. We pitched our camp on the south side of a big snow bank, high up the divide between Timber Creek and Clark's Fork. We had no water but what we got from melted snow. Ed liked to camp high up. He said in that way we would avoid climbing and could take advantage of the bare ridges to travel on.

Old Ed did not believe in morning hunting for bear; he said there was no use going out before the afternoon. He had lots of peculiar notions about hunting and the funny part of it all was that most of them worked. He hated to go to bed at night and

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would sit up till three in the morning, sipping tea and "spinning yarns." He was interesting, for he had seen that wonderful game country when it was literally teeming with game of all kinds, and sleepy as the cook and I would get, we just had to listen to Ed tell another one.

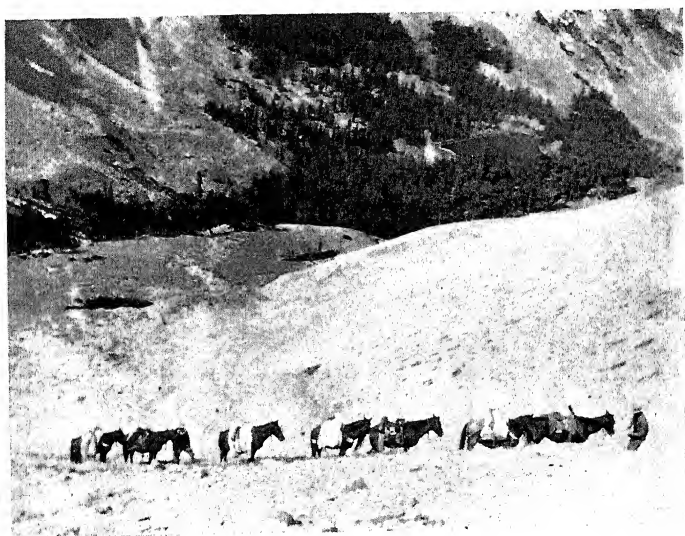
In the morning, you couldn't get him out of his blankets; he was simply dead and buried, but didn't know it. 'Long about eleven, he started to groan and grunt and turn and stretch and finally with a yell, he'd throw aside his blankets and dash out barefooted into a snow bank, grab a snowball in each hand and rub his little red eyes until he could hold them open. Then he would finish dressing, warm himself by the fire and imbibe about four or five cups of tea and nothing else. Then he was ready for the day's work. By that time, we would have our saddle ponies in, and soon we would start out.

Ed always hunted by "hunches," that is, he would start out in some preconceived direction and then would let himself drop into a semi-trance, and in almost every instance, would turn off from his original intended direction. But the startling thing about his "hunches" were that almost invariably they came true.

I remember one glorious morning we decided to pull way off in a southerly direction, crossing a



Three of a Kind



Pack Outfit Climbing the Van Dyke Trail



branch of Crandall Creek, and going over and into a big deep timbered basin that looked like real bear country. We started up the ridge which led in the determined direction when Ed, riding far in the lead by himself (he insisted on doing this, so that his "hunches" would come to him undisturbed) suddenly swung off to the right in an entirely opposite direction to the one we decided upon. I did not say anything, but simply followed him (for he had told me to do so) and just as we entered the timber and got in snow, there in front of our eyes were the fresh tracks of a very big grizzly. Well, believe me, I pricked up my ears and loosened up my 50/110 in my scabbard.

The grizzly was slowly walking down through the gully. We could not see him, but could tell this by the length and direction of his tracks, so we decided to circle on him, holding the wind from him to us. We rode in a large circle to the north and gradually circled into the creek bottom toward which he was headed. When we got there, we heard a stick snap and glancing up on the side hill in the thick timber, we saw a mighty big grizzly loping off towards the ridge which we had left.

The snow was about two feet deep in the timber and there was lots of down timber and so we had to go fairly carefully. The big boy had by far the

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better of the chase and when we reached the bare ridge, there about a quarter of a mile away, we saw one of the largest grizzlies it has ever been my good fortune to pop my eyes on, loping up the ridge like a great big ragged ball. He had seen us and was "all set" for another country, so after firing a few chance shots at him, we mournfully let him depart.

Another afternoon we were out afoot, hunting the heavily timbered country lying on the Clark's Fork divide. Ed was ahead, as usual, and I noticed him turn to the south, go a little way and beckon me to come and look. Getting up to him, he showed me a steaming track of a small grizzly. Ed said the bear was not feeding but was bound for the open southerly slopes, just this side of the divide to our left, and that if we hurried, we might see it before it had fed and gone across the divide. He beckoned me to follow, and lit out. Ed was the swiftest and quietest man in the woods that it has ever been my good fortune to follow. In the first place, he dressed very lightly. His clothes really did not weigh anything. He never wore any coat thicker than an overall jumper, and his pants were the lightest he could buy. His underwear was lightweight; and, most important of all, he always wore the lightest, rubber-soled, leather-topped shoes he could get. What was probably more im-

portant still, he had developed a poise of body and a method of forced breathing that was entirely original. Going up hill, he cut the length of his stride in two, but doubled the pace exactly like an auto being put in second speed, and then he would give her the "gas," which, in his case, would be a forced diaphragmatic breathing, in a rhythm about twice as fast as it naturally would be if the breathing was left to follow the muscular demand. In other words, by using his breathing muscles voluntarily, his oxygen supply was always there—more than sufficient for any demand the muscles might make on it. He could fairly run up a mountain, and when he arrived on top, his breathing and heart action would be but slightly quickened. That was the system that he had worked out for travelling the high, steep mountains, and I have followed mountain men from the Mexican border to the Arctic Circle and I have never seen any man that could anywhere nearly equal Ed Van Dyke as a climber of steep mountains.

When I had just made a good start at the mountain side, there on the top, a full half mile higher up, stood Ed, beckoning me to hurry on. I finally staggered up more dead than alive; but Ed (who was twenty years my senior) seemed not to mind the grade at all. He pointed down in the deep snow



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where the bear had done an otter slide, and disappeared in the thick timber. Apparently, he must either have gotten a whiff of us, or had not found food to suit him, for he had not stopped to feed at all, but beat it over the divide through the snow, the depth of which prevented our following.

Another afternoon we were returning from a long trip up to the headwaters of Timber Creek, and had gotten down to within about two miles of our camp when Ed veered off to the left, down through the deep snow of a heavily wooded basin. I said to myself: "The crazy Indian has another hunch; and I wonder if we will really see any tracks this time."

We forced our ponies over some bad pieces of down timber, most of which were burned, in five feet of snow, and every once in a while either he or I would pile up with our ponies on top of us. We had a downhill pull fortunately, and so were able to wallow through to the sunny south where there was hardly any snow. We then turned down the creek and looking off towards the creek bottom, we saw a trail that had all the earmarks of a grizzly. Sure enough, it *was* a grizzly's trail! It appeared absolutely fresh, so we tied up our ponies in a patch of pines, and getting the breeze in our favor, started to circle in on Bruin. For a while he travelled down

country to the south, but suddenly veered off to the left, entering a thickly timbered wash or gully. The trail was fairly steaming and we felt sure he was in the gully just ahead of us. We got "all set"—and I crawled up behind a little pine and looked over, and there not over seventy-five yards away sat a big grizzly bear on his haunches, feeding on the bones of some animal. I lined up my old trusty 50/110 on his left shoulder and turned her loose. Right there and then you'd have thought fourteen menageries had started teasing all the lions, for that bear did some roaring. He was doing a back somersaulting stunt that would have made a Japanese tumbler ashamed of himself. Around and around the gulch he roared and tumbled, and Ed was telling me "to shoot him again—shoot him again." Well, I figured on doing just that thing, but there were a whole lot of scrubby pines in that coulee and that old bear was doing back handsprings in and out among the pines faster than the human eye could follow him, and although I pride myself on being able to see something to shoot at just as quickly as most gun toters, I had to hand it to that bear for being too fast for me.

Finally he quit roaring and pulled up out of the gully and disappeared. We knew by his actions that he had been hit, but were not sure how hard.

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We ran to where we had shot him. He had been chewing on the bones of an old horse; and there was a great swarth of grizzly hair that looked as if it had come off his neck. Then we found a few drops of blood, but as he pulled up out of the gulch and started up the steep mountain side, our hopes of getting him waned, for we knew that had he been hard hit, he could never have made it up the steep bank and would have gone down country instead of up.

Old Ed was one of the best trailers of wild animals I have ever seen. He was fast and sure, and would not waste time unraveling a track. He seemed to know just what an animal was doing, and just where he could pick up the trail that led off. He trailed this bear up the steep mountain side, until the signs of blood disappeared entirely, and he turned and told me that he was sure the bear had been only creased in the neck and that we would never see him again. So we gave him up and with heavy hearts went on into camp. I failed to get this bear because I was young and over-anxious and my shot was a downhill one, and I had not been careful enough to be certain that I was holding low.

For the next few days it snowed hard. The wind blew, and it was very cold. It was bad hunting weather, and for five days old Ed said "his medicine"

was bad, and there was no use leaving camp. He just lay around and slept and imbibed copious quantities of tea and not much food. At night time, his spirit would seem to quicken and his memory and imagination fairly glowed with the happenings of earlier days. That old boy had seen wild game in the Rockies in quantities observed by few mountain men. He had seen elk by the thousands and deer by the hundreds. He had seen black and brown bear by the dozens. He once saw nine grizzlies on one mountain side at one time. So we were compelled to sit up and listen far into the morning hours.

I always made a round each day, no matter what the weather was, with the hope that some old bear would be restless the same as I was, but no such luck. Finally, about five days after the storm had started, the weather cleared again and most of the new snow melted off. Then old Ed's "medicine" began to get strong again; in fact, it was positively pulling him to where we had seen the last bear. He said: "Doctor, let's go over to the gulch and see if there is another bear chewing on the old mare's bones." We went afoot, as it wasn't over a mile away—and we circled far to the north to get the breeze in our faces, and then quietly slipped down through the timber towards the gulch.

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Getting near the steep gulch, we saw fresh signs going down the bank from the south side. This put us up on our toes and we moved slowly with the stealth of Indians over to a point from which we could see where the old mare's bones lay. Slowly peeking out from behind a tree, we saw fresh sign, where the bear had been to the remains of the mare, but he himself was nowhere in sight. Old Ed whispered to me to be extra cautious, saying he felt sure the bear was lying in the nearby timber watching his supper. Step by step we slipped down through the timber, and then out of the timber to the north of us clattered about a dozen white-tail deer. They saw us and disappeared down country with big stiff-legged jumps.

Ed and I were now standing elbow to elbow out in an opening. I was looking at the deer bounding away down toward the thickly timbered creek bottom. I had looked at them for fully three minutes, when all of a sudden directly in front of me, I saw a big, brown object rise, snort, take just two jumps and disappear over a bank. Before he had finished his two jumps, I had thrown my 50/110 hurriedly from my right shoulder and had managed to get it off twice in the bear's direction. But I knew that I had not time to point it right, and then Ed said to me, excitedly, "What in the world was the matter?

I was standing here for three minutes looking at the biggest grizzly I ever saw."

I was mad clear through. Ed's elbow was touching my elbow. In ten seconds he should have known I did not see the bear and have touched my elbow and pointed to where the big grizzly lay half asleep. That was all he would have had to do, and I would have had that big boy's hide; but for some reason of fear, or lack of faith in his small calibre rifle (it was a Remington Lee 25) or in my tenderfoot ability as a grizzly hunter, he stood transfixed and never whispered or made a motion until the big boy himself had winded us and was on his way.

This deal finished me for any more hunting with Ed Van Dyke, and when I got through being mad, I told him I guessed our bear hunt was finished and next day we pulled up our tepee and I took the back trail. I had seen two big grizzlies and tracks of some more. I hit one hard, but too high up to be a fatal shot. I would have had the big one "if" I had seen him when Ed did, for he was lying half asleep only thirty yards away. But Ed had taught me a lot about woodcraft, trailing, walking, packing and stalking, and I came home with a wagonload of woods lore if not with a wagonload of grizzlies.

## VI

### MY FIRST BEAR HUNT WITH MULLENDORE

MY wild goose chase after grizzlies with Old ED Van Dyke made my desire for bear hunting all the keener. I noticed that the big majority of the boys around the country were like me. They had killed a good many deer and a few elk, but when it came to bear there was nothing doing. A few were trapped each year by Swan Youngstrom, a rancher, who lived close to the mountains, so we all knew that there were bear in these regions.

It so happened that the winter before a man by the name of Horace Mullendore drifted into our country. He had come up from the Sun River District, where he had been trapping and hunting with an old-timer by the name of Buckmaster. Mullendore used to stop over night now and then at our cow-camp and naturally we got to talking about bear hunting. He told me he had never really hunted bear much, but had had a close call with a couple of grizzlies which he had stumbled onto

unawares. He was a born hunter, this fellow Mullen-dore, one of the best I ever hunted with, a man of untiring energy, a dead shot, and possessed of an almost supernatural instinct for finding game. Horace and I soon became fast friends, and we both decided that just as soon as green grass came we would camp on the trail of the "woolly boys" and stay with them until we got at least one.

As soon as the first sign of Spring showed up we kept our eyes peeled for bear signs, and finally about the 13th of May we saw where a bear had come out of a cañon near the south fork of Red Lodge Creek. Back to the ranch we rode, had supper, got a little chuck together, ran in a few pack ponies and made ready to pull for the bear country in the morning. We pulled out from the ranch about seven o'clock, and at noon we had our bear camp established.

We had no more than gotten settled in camp when winter came on again for fair. Two feet of snow was nothing unusual to see in the morning. Our ponies got disgusted and pulled for the ranch, leaving us plumb afoot. We let them go for a day or two until the worst was over, then Horace and I each grabbed a bridle and went horse hunting. We found them close to the ranch. Each of us hopped a pony and drove the bunch back to camp on a high lope.



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After this we took no chances, always keeping a picket pony up.

Along about the 18th of May we saw more bear signs travelling along the foothills, but as yet nary a bear. On the 21st I had a strong hunch to pull towards the Butcher Creek country, so we untied "Old Shep" (a half-breed Collie that old Frank Kelly had lent us) and hit the trail. We had almost reached Butcher Creek and had not seen a toenail scratch. Walking along a ledge of reef rock looking down into a large basin of jack pines—the worst jungle you ever saw—my medicine got very strong, and I said to Horace, "Horace, my medicine says, 'bear in that jungle!'" Horace said: "All right, old boy, if there is I will chase him out for you!" At that he grabbed up a rock and hurled it down into the jungle, at the same time yelling, "Sic 'em, Shep; sic 'em, old boy." Shep heard the crash made by the rock and dashed down in the jungle. In a second he began to bark, and bark, and bark, and presently we could see the jack pines move in front of him. Then, just for a second, we saw a dark, glossy hide, knew it was a bear, and the fight was on.

He was in a basin with only one way to get out without our seeing him, and that was down the country. The west, south and east slopes were bare, and the jungle was about 400 yards across and so

thick a man could hardly get through. The natural way for him to pull out was south towards the mountains. We held a hurried council of war and decided that Horace should cross the jungle below him and get out on the western side of the jungle. I would stay on the east side and both of us would holloa and throw rocks and try to drive him out of the jungle towards the mountains. We were afraid to shoot on account of it being hard to tell the dog from the bear. Old Shep stuck to him in great shape. He would chase him up a-ways, and then the bear would turn around and chase him clear out of the jungle. All this time Horace and I were holloaing and urging Shep to go in and take him out. Back and forth they fought, we keeping even with them on either side. Then the bear tried to beat us to the jungles in the lower country, but we were not going to let him get away like that; so Horace dashed into the jungle below him from the west and I from the east, both firing off our guns and holloaing. This turned him again towards the mountains. "He's going out sure this time, Mack. Beat him to the open timber, or we will lose him," yelled Horace. I alone had the chance to beat him to where he had to come out, for on the side Horace was there were some bad pockets of down timber which took time to get through, so it was up to me. I had a full

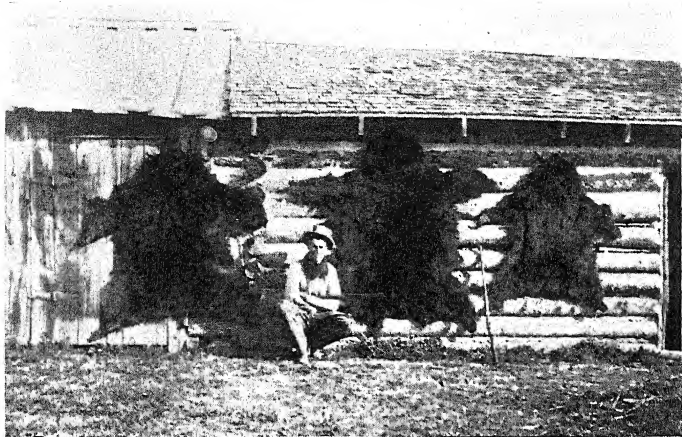
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quarter of a mile to go straight up before I would be sure of an open shot. The bear was running for his life. I was running for the bear. I could hear him plainly as he crashed through the jack pines, only a few yards away. I had gone only half the distance to the opening and was about all in from running. It seemed I could not go another step; but I was filled with the spirit of the fight and would rather have died than stop, so I staggered on up. The bear was not twenty steps away, but still hugging the thick timber and breathing like a steam engine. Another heartrending fifty yards and out he came, not fifteen steps below me. He jumped to clear a log. The old .50 belched forth, the bear dropped, groaned, and passed in. I had killed my first bear.

Horace came tearing through the timber, his face beaming with smiles. He saw the old bear lying dead, reached out his hand and said, "Put it there, old boy; you sure done yourself proud." It had been a great fight and we had won out, and were as happy as a couple of clams at high tide.

In a few minutes we had peeled off his hide, cut off a hindquarter and his skull, and were hitting the back trail.

For three or four days following it snowed and stormed continually; then it broke up and we again



The Author and His First String of Pelts



My First Bear



pulled out towards Butcher Creek. We had just gotten near the basin where we had killed the first bear, when we saw where a large bear had gone on ahead just a few hours before us. We followed it a short distance and saw where it had turned down into a draw so we stopped to think it over a bit. We decided that as it was then pretty well on in the morning the bear might stay in the jungle of jack pines most all day before coming out where we could see to shoot him. So we thought best to make a drive on him. I was to stay on the reef rock ridge, where I could command the only natural outlet towards the mountains, and Horace was to take Shep, circle away around below and come up through, making as much noise as possible. I took my position and Horace and Shep pulled out to make the drive. They had gone but a few minutes when I heard Shep bark just as if he was up against the real thing. I waited a few minutes but nothing turned up, so I "beat it" over where I had heard the noise, thinking perhaps that the bear might have dashed out some other way. In a few minutes I heard a shot. I thought sure Horace had done the trick, but when I got up to him he was cussing most artistically. I said, "What in the world's wrong?" and heard him reply, "Damn porcupines; look at that dog's mouth." I looked, and sure

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enough he had got a real old allopathic dose—four hundred quills if there was one. Well, if cussing would have done any good the quills would have fallen out, but it didn't, so we had the delightful job on our hands of relieving a dog of a faceful of quills. We had to walk all the way down to the Youngstrom ranch to borrow a pair of pliers to pull quills with. That agony over with, we trailed back to camp, all feeling very blue, particularly old "Porcupine Shep."

After lunch it set in to rain—one of those dark, foggy rains of early spring. It made us feel still more blue. In fact, things were getting so dark that I felt that some sort of a dawn ought to appear, so I said, "Horace, old boy, my medicine says another bear before sundown."

"Good boy," says Horace. "Which way does your medicine lead you?"

"It leads me up that old logging road which comes out on top of that open hogback south of here." We stepped out of our tepee and I pointed to the mountains and showed him just where I meant. We started at three o'clock. At half past four we were crowning the last rise; my medicine was very strong, so strong in fact that I made him take off his hat, and both of us snaked it over the hill. I lay over, but we never got over, for when taking our

first peep we saw a large black bear headed straight at us, about a half mile away, just across a big draw. We slid back, circled around until we got into the jack pines, and sneaked out to where we could see old Mr. Bear coming down a hogback, rolling rocks as he came. Just what play to make we could not decide. We could take a long shot at him as he crossed the creek below us, but that was uncertain at best. From the creek to where we were was one mass of jack pines, with only an occasional opening. We finally thought it best to stay where we were, and take the chance of having him continue to come the way he was headed. We saw him make a run and jump the creek. Then we held our breath and waited, only a minute, however, before I made out his black body moving among the jack pines, only a hundred yards away. This was the psychological moment, and I carefully pointed the old smoke-stick in what I thought to be the right direction and pressed the trigger—when the old bear crashed down through the timber towards the creek, with Horace and me, and “Porcupine Shep” hot on his trail. Shep soon rounded him up, and had him coming at Horace with his mouth wide open. Horace wanted to give me all the shots, but things were looking “kinder warm” just then, so he yelled to me, “He’s coming right at me with his mouth wide open. Shall I shoot?”



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I answered, "H——, yes, man, don't let him get you." I knew the bear was wounded and was fighting for his life. I heard him shoot, dashed over to where he was and asked him, "Where's the bear?" He said, "Down towards the creek. Hear Shep bark? He's still fighting him." We tore through the jungle to the edge of the creek, and there was the bear standing up to his waist in the middle of the torrent, making his last fight, with old Shep snapping and barking at him every time he moved. I jerked my old Winchester to my shoulder and bored him through the neck. Down he sank and in a minute he was being carried rapidly down stream. In a second I took in the situation and realized that, unless I ran below him and grabbed him as he went by, we might never get him, since the creek was flooding its banks and running like a mill-stream. So I yelled to Horace to come quickly, dropped my gun—I had to—dashed down the creek about fifty yards to where it narrowed up some, climbed out on a fallen log and grabbed old Mr. Bear by the leg just as he was about to be swept by me. I did not know whether he was alive or dead—I never stopped to think—I wanted that bear, and I hung to him till Horace came and helped me pull him in. That night going back down the trail we were happy enough to drive away a whole wagonful of blues.

We were having the worst deal in the weather line that spring that I have ever seen in Montana. Our next handout was two solid weeks of fog, so thick you could not see a hundred yards. We stayed at camp for three days, then decided we would go into the ranch and stretch up our two pelts; get some more chuck and wait till it cleared up again. For ten solid days we waited. Then it broke up just a little and we decided to hunt the East, Rosebud Cañon country for one day and then quit, as it was getting late to hunt bear. So we pulled out, rode up the south side of the cañon, clear to the lake, had lunch and started home on the north side. We had ridden about half way down the cañon when Horace stopped just a minute, beckoned to me to follow quickly, and turned his horse into a clump of quaking aspens. When we were hidden he told me he had located a brown bear about 300 yards up the side of the cañon. There was absolutely no way to sneak on him, as the hillside was completely bare. So we decided that the best way to do was to take the saddles off our horses and lead them as if they were range horses going up the cañon (we hiding behind them on the off side), then gradually circling them in the direction of the bear. This game worked well. As soon as we left the timber the bear stopped, looked us over, figured we

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were a couple of range horses drifting up the cañon, and went on eating. It wasn't until we had circled to within 200 yards of him that he got nervous and started for the high country. We immediately turned our horses loose and opened fire. My first shot struck under him; Horace's first shot just over his back. My second shot struck him through both his front legs at once, almost severing his legs at the elbow joints. When struck, he whirled around, snapping at himself, but making little progress except down grade. We knew we had him, so we withheld our fire till we got close. Just as I got up to him I thought that both his front legs were entirely shot off, and when he and Shep had mixed it up and were rolling down the hill together (both scared to death) Horace yelled to me to come on and kill the bear before he killed Shep, but I insisted that I was going back to find those two front legs. Then Horace just doubled up and laughed fit to kill himself, and it was fully five minutes before he could compose himself sufficiently to tell me that Bruin still had his front legs with him although just hanging by pieces of skin. We then ran down and fixed the bear so that he didn't miss those front legs. We skinned him and cut his two hindquarters to take home to roast in celebration of my first successful bear hunt.

## VII

### GETTING A SEVEN POINT ELK FOR DAD

ALL one summer we were running the HF cattle in the Bad Land breaks, on both sides of the lower Clark's Fork River country. We had quite a good-sized herd to take care of, and as the cowboys say, "they were scattered from 'hell to breakfast.'" This meant a whole lot of hard, continuous riding for the boys of the HF outfit from the calf round-up in May and June, line-riding the steers all summer long, and then, hardest of all, the beef round-up in the last part of August and first weeks of September. We had to cover a rough, Bad Land territory, seventy-five miles long by about thirty-five miles in width, and when you are riding a Bad Land country, you virtually have to comb every foot of it to be sure you have done a thorough job.

It was a very hot summer, the streams were low and in many places far apart. Many a day our tongues would swell up, and feel like a mouthful of dry cotton. The heat and the reflection of the

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sun was terrific, and many an afternoon, 'long about three o'clock, while crossing some stretch of alkali country, we would get so dizzy that we would have to hold to our saddle horns to keep from falling off our horses. But during all this travail of summer, I had a far pleasanter picture in my mind and that was that just as soon as we had gathered and put our beef on the railroad at Red Lodge, I was going to get hold of my old hunting partner, Horace Mullendore, and we would pull for God's country in the "everlasting hills"; even if the name of the place we were heading for did not sound Godlike (it was Hell Roaring Basin), it belied its name, for it really was God's country in the truest sense of the word.

'Long about the fifteenth of September, we had put the last of the HF beef on the cars with a ticket for Chicago, and I rode back with Charley Wright (that prince of cowmen) to his home ranch on the bench just northeast of Red Lodge. After putting away a real dinner, and tying my cowboy bed with a running "W" on old Texas and riding "Coyote," I bid all the Wrights a fond "adios" and spiritually turning from cowboy to hunter, I struck out for Red Lodge Creek where Mullendore had his camp.

Passing through Red Lodge en route, I stopped

just long enough to get my mail, and among the letters was one from my dear old Dad, who was head of a banking house in Wall Street. He said that the Downtown Club (of which he was President at the time), would like to have an elk head to hang over the fireplace in the smoking room, and for me to try to get him a good one. These orders gave an added zest to our hunt for, before I got the letter, we just had a meat hunt in mind, but now added to the call for winter meat, were the orders for a good head, and Horace joined me in the enthusiastic determination to get Dad a six or seven point bull's head, if we had to go through "hell and high water" to do it.

I camped with Mullendore and his family that night and early next morning we rode on over to my camp between the Rosebuds to get another pack horse, (Prince) a tepee, and a little more chuck. We did all this, and returned next afternoon to Mullendore's camp again, arranged all our packs and were all set to hit the trail next morning.

All next day we struggled up the steep and winding trail that leads up Red Lodge Creek as far as the mining cabin of old Jack Wells. From then on, at that time, there was no more trail. You simply had to zigzag across the steep hogback that finally came out to open, bushy country at timber line, and

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then you could ride across the divide over into Hell Roaring Basin.

We crossed the rocky divide along about three P.M., and wound our way down to a little bunch of timber that grew just at timber line, and near which ran a glacier stream. There was fairly good horse feed nearby and lots of good pitch snags for firewood, so we hobbled our two pack ponies and picketed our two riding ponies. Then we cut three long dead pines and rigged up our white man's tepee (the best hunting tent ever devised, with the exception of the Indian tepee which necessitates too many poles for light travel.) Our tepee was sixteen feet in diameter and eleven feet to top of smoke hole. We had a heavy brown, 18 oz. canvas, 4 feet wide—sewed tight on the inside as a sod cloth, leaving an eight-foot fire circle. This kept all draughts out, kept our beds dry and was very fine in all respects. The smoke hole was about fourteen inches in diameter and we always carried a canvas wind-breaker which we tied up on the windward side on the outside. I have used this rig for twenty-five years in all kinds of weather; in deluges of rain and driving blizzards and with just a small fire, I always had all the comforts of a fireplace at home. The beauty of a tepee is that you only need a little wood for your fire compared to what you need when you depend on

the open camp fire, and then you always have an even and satisfactory heat that keeps your body and mind feeling happy.

While Horace saw to the ponies, driving them up nearer camp and giving them a handful of salt, I cooked supper and this was soon put away properly, dishes washed up and lying comfortably on our cowboy tarpaulin beds, we lit our peace pipes and renewed again the memories of many happy days on the hunting trail.

Horace Mullendore and I seemed to have been foreordained to be hunting partners. Our spirits blended in such a manner that no matter what was the nature of the outward circumstance, we each re-acted to it in a way that brought to the other joy, enthusiasm and quiet content. What a wondrous feeling it is to be out in the wilderness with a man like that! Never a jarring note; absolute dependability each toward the other; in both our hearts a song with the same chord and about us the wondrous glory of God's morning in his "understanding hills"—sparkling and purified by winter's first fall of snow, lit up and vivified by God's greatest gift to man, the glorious vibrating sunshine. As Sheriff Potter used to say, "if it was any better, you couldn't stand it."

Next day we were greeted by such a morning, and because of the new snow, we decided to hunt afoot,



## 148 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

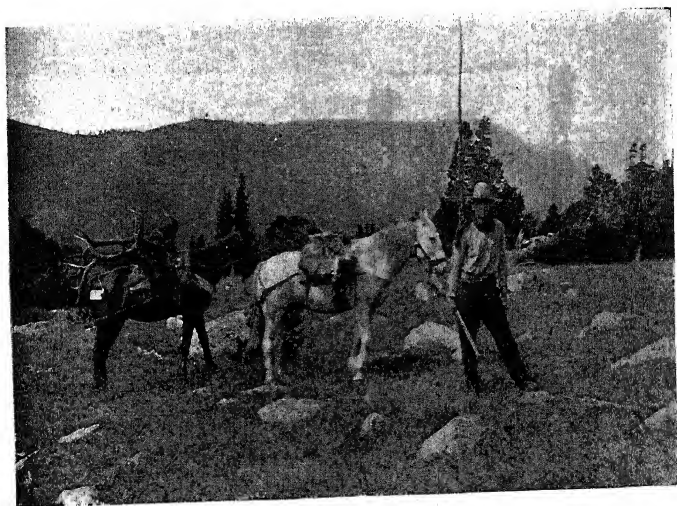
figuring we would be much less conspicuous sneaking about through the pines than if we went on horseback, as horses stand out so prominently against the illuminated hillsides. We decided it was much safer to drop down along the creek bottom and "Indian" it along, slowly, from pine tree to pine tree, watching the hillsides and sky line.

We soon crossed a few tracks of deer (black-tail), but as we had our minds "all set" for elk, we let the deer go and slowly "ooched" our way up to the south end of a patch of burnt pines, sloping down towards the East Rosebud Lake. Here we ran on to some fresh sign of elk. The timber here had been all burnt, and the ground between the trees was soft and sandy, and here and there were many patches of bunch grass. Our "medicine" was getting very strong. We felt sure that an elk was liable to burst out at any moment.

Suddenly, we heard an animal step on a dead tree, uprooted by the wind, and just a second later, we both got a strong whiff of elk. From then on we were "ready and then some." Every nerve was alert, our eyes searching with lightning-like quickness, we stepped high and with catlike softness. Then with a snort and a smashing of dead branches, a monarch of the hills rose from his bed about 100 yards away and ran off through the tall timber,



Dad's Order Filled



Packing Him Out



but he was a bit late in starting and before he had gone fifty yards, our 50/110s had done their duty, and he was ours!

With our rifles cocked and ready to hand him another, should he still figure on making a getaway, we ran up to where he lay and found he no longer needed any further doses of lead.

What a grand animal he was! Large and well formed in body and carrying a very beautiful seven point (each side) set of horns. Even old Shep, the half-breed collie we had along, seemed satisfied, but I really think his mind had pictures of the meat and not the horns.

We skinned out his head, quartered up his body and covering it all with brush to keep the wolves and coyotes away, we left him and happily content, climbed down to the creek bottom and then slowly crawled along the hogback to our tepee at timberline.

Horace walked out to see how the ponies were all behaving, and I gathered wood and fixed supper. It got mighty sharp at night time and many a time we blessed our warm and cheerful tepee.

A cheerful fire, a full stomach, after an active and successful day ahunting, lying on a good cowboy bed, your peace pipe doing fine—a tried and true partner enjoying it all with you, your pulse beating

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with the warmth and strength of a hardy outdoor life; could a man wish for more?

We knew that Dad wanted to give the head to the Downtown Club fairly soon, and the "Red Gods" had granted us "good medicine," so we decided to put our pack saddles on old Prince and Tex and lead them afoot to where our bull lay and bring him back. All this sounds pretty simple when you write it down, but in reality it meant a whole day of the hardest kind of work. The kind of country we had to lead those ponies over that day was really cruel. It was mostly the steepest kind of rock slides with boulders anywhere from the size of a watermelon to the size of an ice-box. It was dangerous, too. A misstep or a fall might mean a broken leg for horse or man. I remember one particularly bad slide of large boulders we had to cross over (and there was absolutely no better way) when the pack horses had to make a huge jump over an immense boulder about four feet high and five feet wide. We were leading old Prince and had little Texas tied to Prince's tail. When we got to this impasse of boulders we untailed Texas from Prince and with Horace leading Prince with a long rope, and with me "hazing" him from behind, we made him make the jump on the boulder, which he did in good shape. But to little old Texas with his short legs that boul-

der looked like sure death and he absolutely refused to make a try at it. We tried every way we could think of to get him over, but there was "nothing stirring." So we had to stop and figure awhile, for we were "up against it." We absolutely needed two pack horses to bring in the head and all the meat, and already half the day had been put in climbing and twisting to where we now were. We decided that somehow or other old Texas would have to go along. So we made Prince jump back over the boulder and tied old Texas to his tail again. Then goaded him on for another jump. It was a tense moment. Old Prince went up and over again and his lunge pulled little Texas about a quarter way up the side of the boulder, and there he set himself, pulling backward with all his strength on Old Prince's tail. It was surely a sight for the gods! A tug of war over an immense boulder between two pack ponies, one pulling forward, the other backward. It looked as if Big Old Prince pulled little Texas' neck out about a yard, but still he kept lunging backward. We stood entranced, praying that the hackamore rope would hold, and that Texas would make the leap. Our prayers were answered, for in a moment Tex gathered himself together and leaping like a deer, he jumped clear over the boulder, almost on top of Prince. He slid

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off of Prince's back, fell down a time or two among the boulders and finally, with a grunt and a groan, was up and ready to travel again. We finally reached the elk, packed what we wanted on the horses and late in the afternoon we slowly and carefully won our way back to Camp.

Next morning we arose at the first streak of dawn, ate a hearty breakfast, packed up, crawled up out of Hell Roaring Basin, slid down the steep Red Lodge Creek trail and by mid afternoon had Dad's seven point elk head travelling east.

## VIII

### WHITE-TAIL BUCKS IN THE EAST ROSEBUD CAÑON

WAITING until the first real blizzard came in November, my old pard, Horace Mullendore and I would put in a day or so hunting in the bottoms of the East Rosebud Cañon. In those days, white-tail were thick in that country and we were sure to start some. The white-tail is quite a bit wiser than the black-tail and you have got to use your brains a bit to beat them at their game of hide and seek. We soon found that when we both stayed together and tried to trail them, we had mighty poor luck. We never seemed quite able to catch up for a good shot. So we thought about it quite a bit over our peace pipes, and decided to try another scheme. We would go afoot up the Cañon as far as we wanted to hunt and then we would take turns making drives through the large patches of brush. One man would go away ahead and pick a good runway for the deer to come jumping



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through, and here he'd stand all ready to shoot while the other fellow, staying behind, would then start to make the drive and would come down through the brush, making all the noise possible.

Just as soon as the deer would hear him coming, they would bound along down the river and the man posted at the far end would gather them in. It worked to perfection in that country and we always got a couple of bucks each day we made a drive.

## IX

### MULLENDORE AND I HUNT FOR BEAR AGAIN

ANOTHER winter had been fought through and nature's miracle of springtime was being enacted again, and once more our blood stirred for action. Our cattle had been turned out in the lower country and were again enjoying the new grass. It would be a month or more before we would start the calf round-up, and so I decided to lope over and smoke a pipe with my old hunting pard, Horace Mullendore, on Red Lodge Creek and see whether or not his bear-hunting medicine was working as strong as mine. I found that it was, for that old chunk of rawhide was always "rearing to go" on a hunt. Both of us were just itching to get on the trail of Bruins once more. We loved the free and independent life in a tepee. We loved the beautiful quiet hours of "watchful waiting" we put in lying far up on the mountain side, with our glasses ever searching for bears to show up on some stony ridge or green slope.

Last time we had done all our own cooking and as

## 156 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

we put in long, hard hours hunting in all kinds of weather—snow and rain and wind—night time would often find us back at our camp too tired to cook properly, and so as Horace's brother, Elzy, had nothing in particular to do, we got him to come along and tend camp. We got our grub and tepee together and drove it all up to our old camp ground on the east fork of Red Lodge Creek.

We pulled into camp about the fifth of May, and expected to get a bear right off, but we often get a different deal from what we expect! For a few days it was warm and springlike and the snow in the mountains melted fast and new grass showed here and there.

We rode up the Red Lodge Creek Cañon the next day after making camp and there right in front of us coming down the trail was the track of a good-sized bear. We trailed him down below the reef rock where he had fed around the spring holes a bit and then he seemed to have had a hunch that the sign was not quite right yet and had pulled back straight up the mountain side where we were unable to follow him on account of the depth of the loose snow. So we rode back to camp very joyful and told each other that in a few days the "woods would be full of bears."

But the old Snow-god had not so willed, and next

## Mullendore and I Hunt for Bear 157

morning snow lay there three feet on the level, and winter had us again in her grip. We thought it would be a matter of a day or so, three at the most, but it was not so. Horace said the old Snow-god had turned on the snow and gone away and forgotten to turn it off. We'd go out every day and lunge around through the timber, just to keep in trim and to keep our spirits up. We saw tracks of wolves and coyotes and a few grouse and snowshoe rabbits, and that was all. Not a bear was stirring.

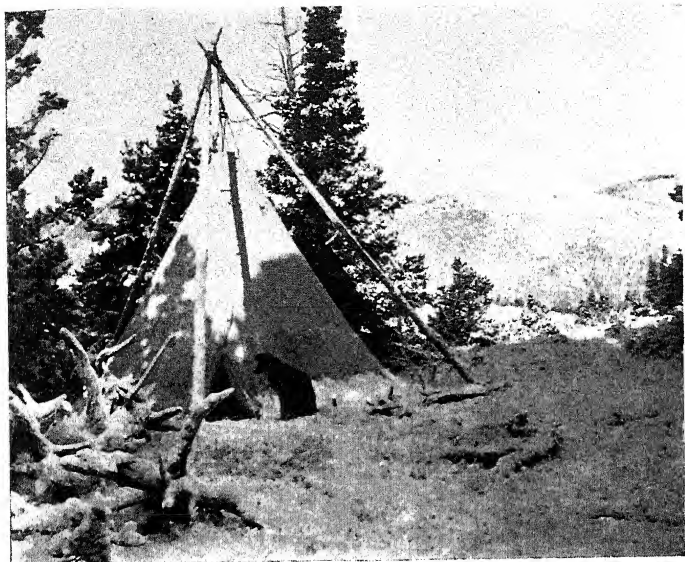
Crossing a flat one morning, we jumped a coyote about a hundred yards away. I thought it might be a good idea to practice up a bit on him, so I unlimbered my old 50/110 and shot over him, under him and between his legs as he was beating it across the flat. Horace got kind of nervous by this time, the coyote being then about three hundred and fifty yards away, and he said: "I believe I'll try him a whirl," and that keen-eyed old Texas ranger sure floored Mr. Coyote. It was one of the best shots I ever saw a white man make.

Each morning we'd think surely this would be the last of the bad weather, and that it must warm up and spring really come. But the weather didn't break. It kept cold and each day it snowed or rained some more. This kept up for the whole month of May, and when the 30th rolled around and the weather

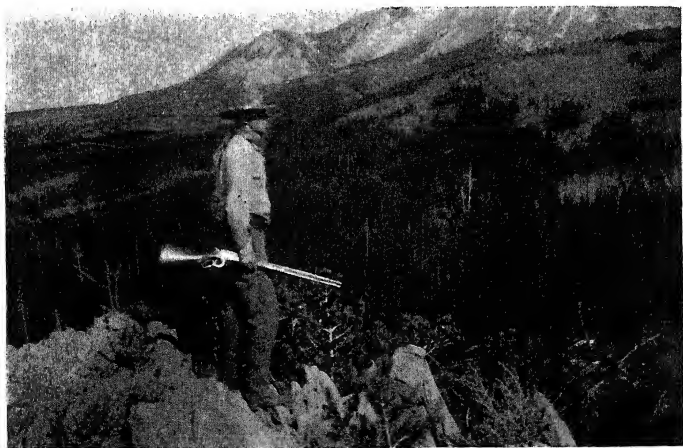
## 158 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

was still bad, we decided we'd break camp for a while and see if that would change our luck. Horace and Elzy both started home and I decided to go to Red Lodge over Decoration Day and see some friends. I decided to ride the foothill trail that ran along the reef rocks clear into Red Lodge. I knew there might be a chance to see something so I took my "smoke-stick" along too.

I left camp about seven A.M. The weather was rather grey and cold, but after I had gone a mile or so it lightened up some and a real Chinook wind set in, all of which made everything look much more cheerful. I had crossed the big flat south of the Ellis ranch and was slowing up to scan the big basin in front of me, when not over a quarter of a mile away on the south slope were three bears. They were all feeding on the fresh grass and roots on the sunny side of a little hogback (ridge). All thought of town left me and I backed my pony out of sight and studied the situation. It was not an easy sneak, for the minute I showed up on the sky line on the north slope of the basin, I would be in plain sight. I decided to leave my horse where he was, circle away round through the quaking asps to the north, cross the creek and come up on them from the east. I figured I had better move fairly fast as they were only in a little opening and probably would



Our Whiteman's Tepee in the Hell Roaring Basin



Good Bear Country, Red Lodge Creek Foothills



## Mullendore and I Hunt for Bear 159

not be there long. So, shedding my mackinaw jacket, spurs, etc., and filling up the magazine of the old 50/110, I slipped down through the timber, crossed the creek, and then very, very carefully, step by step, I crawled up to the little hogback where I had seen the bear. When I came out on the hogback itself, I got down and crawled, for I knew the bears were just over the crown of the ridge. I crawled up to the top on my stomach and peering over, saw two bears—one two-year-old, right in front of me, and another larger one down at the edge of the timber about a hundred yards away. I figured I must kill the one nearest me first, for any second he would wind me, and then dash off with a snort, taking the others with him, so I very slowly “ooched” my old Winchester into position and shot the nearest bear dead as a doornail. I then got up on my feet and took two shots at the larger bear, going up through the quaking asps.

I knew the first gentleman needed no further attention, and so let him be and took right in after the larger bear. It was hit hard some place, for its steps were short and bloody, but after trailing it for about a mile, I had to let it go, as the blood seemed to have stopped, and it had kept on the stony open flat and there were no tracks.

I was sure sore at not getting the big one, but at



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least I had one, and I knew now for sure that the weather had broken, since the bears had come out of their dens.

Well, here were the bears, but where were the camp and my hunting pards? Believe me, I had some riding to do that day to get things going again. I cleaned out the first bear, piled some brush over him, and hopping that rangy old cayuse of mine, Ginger, I hit a high lope for the ranch to get Horace. He had just had dinner and when I told him what had happened, he came to life anew and we were soon beating it back to the crest of "Three-bear ridge."

We gave the big bear about an hour's more trailing to see if by circling we could find any trace of it, but to no avail. Horace then took the two-year-old bear across his lap and we slowly rode back to our camp, skinned out Mr. Bear and hung up some good bear meat to eat. It seemed now that there were bear tracks most everywhere but they stuck pretty close to the timber (jack pines) most of the time and were hard to see. Horace had gathered together three or four "bear dogs" of various description, from a little fox terrier to a supposed-to-be wonderful fox hound bitch from Kentucky.

A day or so following, just across the creek from camp, we saw a good sized black bear come ambling

## Mullendore and I Hunt for Bear 161

out of the jack pines and I told Horace that I would go over and try and shoot it. The minute he heard a shot, he must come running with the hounds, for I knew that if the bear was not dead, he would go for the impenetrable jack pines, and then our only chance would be dogs.

I wallowed through the creek and the swampy brushy bottom, slowly sneaked out to where the bear was and in a few moments located it feeding just outside of the jack pines. It seemed to get my wind somehow and moved off towards the brush. It was about one hundred and seventy-five yards off, and when I fired it did a back somersault, and while it made the pines, I thought sure it was dead. In a few minutes Horace was there with the "bear dogs," and they immediately took in on Mr. Bruin's trail. They only ran it about seventy yards when we heard the old Kentucky bitch give a yell and we knew that she had met old Mr. Bear. We heard no more, but in just a minute out the dog came with her left ear torn and bleeding. She had met the bear, but now she was a "snowshoe rabbit hound" and not a bear dog. She was through absolutely; she wouldn't look sideways at a bear track from then on.

We knew the bear was wounded badly, and that it was dangerous to monkey around much in those thick jack pines where a man had to crawl and

## 162 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

could hardly raise his rifle, but we thought nothing of chances in those days, and we crawled all through those jungles on our hands. We heard the bear twice, but could not see it. The pines were impenetrable. You couldn't see a gun's length ahead of you any place. We stayed with it till dark and then went on into camp with our faith in "bear hounds" a little shattered. Elzy had come back and we were now bear hunting early and late.

One morning it was raining pretty hard, so we thought we would ride east along the trail and see if we could pick up a track as it crossed the trail. We saw several small tracks of bear, but none that looked like a real one until we had gone about four miles; then as plain as day, in the soft mud, we saw where quite a large black bear had slid down a steep muddy bank, crossed the trail and was bound to be feeding around in the swampy brakes below. The track was not over an hour old, so we tied up our ponies and shedding our slickers got all fixed up for a real still-hunt, for that was our only chance in those swampy jungles. Luckily, the breeze was in our favor, and slowly, noiselessly, step by step, we slipped along his trail as he meandered along down through the brush.

Finally, we came to a little creek that was arched over with willows, but on each bank for four or

## Mullendore and I Hunt for Bear 163

five feet there was no brush, nothing but nice, tender green grass and fresh roots. The minute we popped our eyes on this spot we felt the bear must be somewhere right in front of us, for plainly his tracks showed he had gone on down the soft bank.

We got right down on our hands and knees and moved along by inches, searching every bush that looked anything like the shape of a bear, for a bear does not always look like a bear when you just see a little of him in the thick brush. We turned a little bend and there standing right in the little creek and munching the grass at the edge of the bank was the gentleman we had been looking for during the last three-quarters of an hour. He was only seventy-five yards away, and there was not a thing in the world between him and ourselves. I was ahead and I hardly dared to draw a breath, for if he saw us before we could shoot, it would be one jump to the brush and our hunt would have been in vain. But he seemed to have been mighty hungry, and was entirely concentrated on his breakfast. I slowly and carefully got the old smoke-stick to my shoulder, and aiming at the bear's left shoulder, touched her off.

A tremendous lunge, another shot, and nothing was in sight. Horace said: "My Lord, man, you missed him!"

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I said: "Horace, old pard, if I missed that bear, I've made my last bear hunt." Just then as we were running up to where the bear had stood, we heard a growling in the thick brush not over thirty yards away, and dashing up saw our friend on his back. Another shot and he grew quiet forever. He was a large male with a beautiful, long pelage.

We were very happy over getting him, for we had made a hard and careful sneak on him and really the chances of actually still-hunting a bear in those jungles are about ten to one against you.

We skinned off his pelt and cut off his hind-quarters, and getting our ponies rode "hearts high" into camp to be welcomed by Elzy with a broad grin of approval.

Whenever the weather was clear, we used to ride up the mountain side and get up on some commanding shelf of limestone reef rock. There we would lie for hours, with our glasses ever on the job, scanning the open spots in the country below us. We could really cover about ten miles of country from one of these observation points, and this is really the right way to hunt big game in any country that you can see around in. As an Indian hunter said: "Hunter keep still, let the game do the moving." Hunting in this manner, you can see the first move that any animal makes, and he never sees

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you. Then you get the wind, make a quick, careful sneak and if you point the little end of the gun right, the game is yours.

We would often see many different kinds of game while lying up on the mountain sides hunting bear. We would see white- and black-tail deer. Sometimes the bands of black-tail deer would run all the way from a dozen up to sixty in number. The white-tail generally not over a dozen. We would see quite a few elk, and turning our glasses towards the mountains, would quite often pick up a ram or two or a bunch of a dozen or two ewes. Quite often, we saw a timber wolf or two or three coyotes. Many times we would see porcupines and occasionally a wildcat or a lynx.

One afternoon about three P.M., we were way up on a reef we had named "Hunchback." The year previous we had a hunch that if we climbed up there, we would see a bear, and we did; hence the name. We had hardly tied up our ponies and gotten straightened around to have a good look when on a little green park about three miles away, we saw a beautiful big black bear come ambling out and go to feeding on the fresh greens. In a minute we were in our saddles again and were dashing down towards camp and the foothill trail, as it was the only way we could get over to the park where the bear had showed

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up. We went by camp on a high lope and yelled at Elzy to put on the frying pan, for we were going to bring him back some more bear meat.

Quickly we got to the ridge where he was and rode up to within about a quarter of a mile of the park and then dismounted. I turned the ponies over to Horace and told him to hold them quiet until he heard me shoot, and then to ride right up. As I sneaked up to where the bear was, I was hoping against hope that he would still be out in the opening, for it had been fully twenty minutes since we had left our lookout on Hunchback Cliff. Twenty minutes is a long time for a bear to stay on a half acre of open country, but as I peered up through the willows, I saw him ripping up an old log and lapping up the ants that poured out. He was headed directly towards me, and was but eighty yards away. It was a thrilling moment, for he was a big one, and his long hair showed that he had a wonderful pelt. I dropped down behind a dead log, gathered myself together a bit, and let my heart action slow down as I watched him come closer and closer still until he was but fifty yards off. The wind was blowing from him to me and as long as I kept dead still, I was safe. Gradually, I shoved my Winchester into the proper position and waiting until he turned his head and body sideways. I

touched the trigger. The bear fell, but was up again and coming straight at me. I put another 50/110 under his pelt, which rolled him again, but he regained his feet and came on again until he was but twenty steps off. This time I knew he had to be stopped for good or he would be shaking hands with me and he wasn't a friendly looking animal by a long shot. But as I was an old shotgun shooter the nearer he came the better I liked it, and the safer I felt. At twenty steps I put one low down in the middle of his chest. This put him to sleep for the last time. Just then Horace came dashing up with the ponies, his eyes dancing with excitement, and we were two tickled boys, for this bear had the longest and silkiest coat I had ever seen and was big and fat.

We peeled off his hide, hung up the meat and rode slowly and happily back to our camp on Red Lodge Creek. That night the tepee was filled with the content and joy of victory. Our medicine was strong, and hearts were high; our spirits told us life was good.

We saw a lot of bear sign that spring. It seemed as if almost every place where the imprint of a bear could be seen, there was some sort of a track. We actually saw seventeen bears in about two weeks' time. Of course, most of these were bears that



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appeared for but a moment in some little opening and then disappeared again in the jungle of jack pines. It was a great bear country from the bear's standpoint, but the worst I ever saw from the standpoint of a hunter, as it was hard to get to them when you saw them. Jack pines grew so thick on these foothills that in most places a man literally could not get through them without having his clothes torn off his back. These pines stood about six to nine feet in height and in most places were but six inches apart. Just a solid mass of them.

There were little parks here and there, and along the stream that came down through them, the mountain willows grew and one could worm his way up along a creek. It was a place where most of the work had to be done on foot as a horse could not be ridden anywhere near to where the bear usually showed up. There was a foothill trail that ran along lower down on the flats and through the aspen patches and this we used in order to get to the bear when we sighted one from the mountain side. There was an old logging road up to where we watched on several different points, and on seeing a bear below us, we would have to ride down this road till we hit the foothill trail, and go along this till we got opposite to where we had spotted the bear. Then we took it a-foot up along some little creek and got

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through the best we could to where the bear was. Most of the time the bears had left the openings when we got there.

There was one small bear, about a two-year-old, that we saw on several occasions that gave us a lot of amusement watching him. Most every time we saw him, he'd seem to either be playing, somersaulting downhill or else he would be running as if he were scared to death. We named him "Jumping Jimmy" and saw him on four or five different afternoons, but never bothered him as he was just a little fellow. We saw four or five mother bears with cubs. I remember one afternoon while sitting on the south slope of "Hunchback," a mother bear showed up across the basin to the south and with her were two black cubs. We never hunted she-bears with cubs, so we sat there, watching her. She came down off a rim rock, wound her way down into a secluded little basin in the quaking asps, sniffed around a bit, sat down and then calling her cubs to her, she suckled them for about half an hour, and then meandered off down the creek.

Another afternoon we rode up to the top of "Hunchback" ridge, tied our ponies, took our rifles in our hands and peering over the top of the ridge towards the head of the basin, we saw a big black bear. But as there was nothing but a grassy hill-

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side between us and him, we had the displeasure of seeing him jerk his head up and seeing us, hit on a high lope for the mountains. He kept right around the rim of the basin, which was all wrinkled up with little hollows. We turned loose both our fifties, and I guess we shot fifteen shots apiece, but not a one took effect. All we did was to scare him to death, for he kept right on going clear up and over the divide, and we never saw him again.

One morning we had ridden up beyond the reef rocks to the burnt timbered country beyond and hiding ourselves in a bunch of brush on the high hillside, we got out our glasses and began to scan the open places. Looking down towards the jack pine thickets, we saw an old she-bear amble out with three cubs. They were coming right up the creek through the burnt timber and we figured they would pass only about eighty yards from us. The cubs were about the size of ordinary Tom cats. When they got right near us, we noticed that two were black and one was very light brown, and looked almost yellow in the sunlight. This little family never even guessed there were any hunters within twenty miles of them, but seemed decided to hit for a higher country and kept steadily on up the mountain side and disappeared in the larger pines of the high country. It always gave us a

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thrill to watch a wild animal pass close by, and we loved to study their every movement as they rambled along.

It was getting well along in June by this time and it was nigh time to brand up our new crop of calves. So we decided to hunt only a couple of days more and then quit. We noticed the bears were following the snow line up the mountain side, probably finding fresher and more succulent roots just under the snow banks, so we kept hunting higher up the mountains. Finally, the last day had come, and we had made a big circle up Red Lodge Creek Cañon behind the reef rocks, then turned west up through a pass through the timber, and were just about to slip down through the burnt timber to camp, when right below us, out of the jack pines, were three black bears, one large one and two big yearlings. They all seemed fat, and had good long, solid pelts. It was mighty hard to figure how to get near them as the country between them and us was entirely bare and they might any minute slip back into the jack pines and we would never see them again. So we decided to obey the proverb "when in doubt do nothing," and sat tight to see which way the game would break.

After munching about a bit in the creek bottom they decided they had business somewhere off in the

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burnt timbered country to the west, and started at a good fast walk up the open hillside to our left. Our only chance now was to slip quickly down the steep mountain side and cut them off from the jack pines, and as they had a long way to go before they made the top of the burnt ridge we would be sure to get some shooting, although we knew it would be running shooting for the bears were bound to see us.

In a few seconds we had ridden down the rocky hillside slope and had cut them off from the jack pines, but they had seen us and were going up the opposite hillside on a high lope. Well, right there is where I made the most spectacular and lucky shot I have ever seen made. The big bear was fully five hundred yards away and the yearlings not far behind. I fired one shot aimed just over her back to see where the bullet would hit and saw the dirt fly about five feet too low. I next led her about one jump and held well over and fired. She was just passing a single dead burnt pine and when the bullet struck, she seemed to stop and stand right against the tree. She never made a jump or made any movement that would have made us think she was hit, and we were a bit mystified. We couldn't figure out what her game was. We thought maybe she had decided to hold her ground and fight. The

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yearlings were running on up the hill and we took several shots at them, but did not hit either of them. All this time, of course, we were going fast up towards the big bear. The nearer we got the more mysterious it seemed, for there she stood apparently alive and yet not a move out of her. In a couple of minutes we circled around above her to get a little advantage of her should she put up a possum game and then fight, but then we saw that she was dead, and was on her knees, and leaning squarely up against the tree. The hillside was so steep that it made it look as if she was still standing on her feet. We examined her and found that my second shot had hit her squarely in the center of her neck and had killed her instantly. It was sure a funny one. We had had a most exciting half hour, crowned by success and were a pair of happy and proud boys going back to camp on that afternoon of our last day.

We had now four fine pelts and had enjoyed seeing many bears we didn't get. We had seen a great many deer and elk. We had grown tough and hard from spending over thirty splendid days in the open and as many happy nights around the little fire in the tepee, so with high spirits and contented hearts, we bid the Red Lodge Creek country "adios" and pulled back to our cow-camp, and the calf round-up.

## X

### HUNTING ELK IN A BLIZZARD

WHEN I was out with old Ed Van Dyke after bear, we had along as cook a lad by the name of Clarence Gilbert. He was a good, solid boy who lived with his parents about ten miles up the Clark's Fork River from Van Dyke's. He told me when we broke camp that he would like me to come up some fall and go out after big game with his father and him. He said they had a few pack ponies and all I would have to bring along would be one pack horse with my bed and "war bag." So about two years afterwards, when we were through rounding up and shipping the cattle, I saw that I would have about three weeks or a month from about the twentieth of September on for a big game hunt, so I wrote Gilbert to look for me in about a week and to fix for a hunt.

I got Guy Jenkins to come and ride herd on our "doggies" till I got back, and I tied my bed and "war bag" on a pack pony and started on my three

day trip to Gilbert's. I stopped the first night at Red Lodge, and bought a new supply of tobacco, a few extra socks, etc., and next day made Mirror Lake on the Rock Creek trail. Then in the morning, getting a very early start, I made it clear through to Gilbert's, getting there about eight P.M.

I remember for dinner that night that Ma Gilbert had made up a great pile of vanity cakes. They were about the size of a large pancake, but were very thin and crisp. Old Man Gilbert was a good old scout, but inclined to grunt quite a bit and he had a lot to say derogatory to the vanity cakes. He wanted to know why in the world Mrs. Gilbert wanted to fix up such a foolish sort of dessert, etc. In the meantime, we had stored away the main part of our meal, and Clarence and I were wading in on the vanities and we called them fine and dandy. The old man continued to abuse them, but after a bit seeing nothing else to set his teeth in, he condescended to brush off a corner of one and taste it. Well, it wasn't so bad after all, and then he ate a whole one, and then he was off and the old son of a grunter not only ate all the Mrs. had cooked, but made her fix up another batch and cleaned them all up like a hungry bear. I told her that he didn't deserve to even smell one, let alone have a new batch cooked for him, but I guess she was so glad



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to have him change his mind and call them good that she forgot his abuse.

The next day we had to finish "jerking" a lot of deer meat they had strung out, and then on the following morning we hit it for the hills. We had along in all three saddle ponies and six pack ponies. We went down the river away, crossed Timber Creek and up over the Papoose Creek trail into the Hoodoo mountains.

I, personally, was looking for bear sign, for still standing out clearly in my memory was the picture of some of the big grizzlies I had seen when out with Van Dyke. But the Gilberts didn't seem to bank so strongly on getting bear and thought we should be satisfied with elk.

We camped on the Papoose divide one night, then pulled on over the Hoodoo divide and swung north toward Canoe Lake and beyond. Here we hunted for a day or so, and while we saw plenty of elk sign, it was not fresh and they seemed to have moved off to the south somewhere.

It was now about the third of October. Next day it turned grey, and you could feel snow in the air, and as there was no game where we were, we decided to drop back on Papoose and hunt that country. So we packed up our plunder and moved along the rim of the Hoodoo divide toward the Papoose

Creek Pass. It started to spit a little snow, getting colder and snowing harder all the while. We all decided it had all the earmarks of a regular blizzard; and we hurried our ponies along, so as to be sure to get off the high divide, before we were enveloped by it. We did not stop for lunch, for we knew we just had to hit some place where there was tall grass, wood and shelter or we would be in Dutch. And such a place was a little piece of park about two miles below the divide on the Papoose Creek trail. We made this camp ground about 3.30 P.M. It was just in time, for when I led the bunch into the tall pines and open patches of long grass, we were enveloped by a real western blizzard and up on the mountains it means a war of life and death between man and nature. It was blowing about a sixty mile gale. The snow was falling so thickly you could see but a few yards away and darkness was settling down upon us. We unpacked our ponies, tied them in the lee of some trees in reach of some tall bunch grass, fixed up a tent and started a fire.

I had been over this country once before with Janney and Jack McNutt, and somewhere from the back of my memory came the picture of an old trapper's cabin near a spring. I had a hunch it was close to where we were, so after I knew we had our camp safely established, I told the Gilberts of

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the cabin I had seen and that I would circle around a bit and see if I could locate it. My memory told me it was somewhere near a spring hole, deep in the pines, in this bunch of timber. It was quite dark, snowing and blowing like the very devil, and it would be unsafe to get far from sight of our camp-fire. But my hunch was strong and I let it lead me off to the southern side of the ridge, out of sight of camp and then I ran into a little spring creek and following it up saw about fifty yards ahead what looked like a big tree root covered with snow. I hurried up to have a look and there was my little old trapper's cabin. It had no windows and no door, but it had an old stone and mud fireplace, and a blanket would make a door and a pack blanket cover the window. It sure looked like a mansion to me that night.

I hurried back to camp with my good news, and in an hour's time, we had moved over bag and baggage, started a fire in the fireplace, blanketed the door and window and were as happy and snug as three clams at high tide. Any sort of a cabin that is wind proof has a tent beat forty ways on a night where the temperature is near zero, and the wind is blowing snow at you at the rate of sixty miles per hour. We figured that three days would see the storm break, but the Snow-god had willed other-

wise. For ten solid days it kept it up, letting up for an hour or so around ten o'clock in the morning to get a new start, and then down she would come again worse and more of it. Each morning we would see where deer and elk had been all about us in the timber during the night. One night while lying on our beds smoking, we got to discussing the relative values of various rifle sights, and I, being quite an old hand with a scattergun, where sights don't count for much, said: "Why, boys, I think a man is a heap better off not to have any sights on his rifle at all when his game is inside of one hundred yards."

Well, Old Man Gilbert almost died laughing at that, and when he really saw that I was serious about it, said: "Mack, I'll bet you a new twenty dollar Stetson that you can't take your sights off your rifle and go out and kill an elk at any distance." I told him the bet was on, and promptly removed both front and rear sights from my old 50/110 Winchester.

Next day it let up a bit about a quarter to ten and leaving the old man to tend the ponies and cook, Clarence and I wallowed out into three or four feet of snow to see if we could settle the bet.

We drifted off to the southern slopes and saw where great bands of elk and deer had crossed the

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ridge during the night. We kept just inside of the timber and watched the open grassy hillside now covered by snow three feet deep. It was still snowing but the wind had let up considerably. Suddenly out of a patch of brush a five point bull elk snorted and dashed off down the slope on a high lope. He was but sixty yards away when he started, and he ran quartering to the right down a steep hill through some burnt timber. He looked like a pretty big bird to me and I did not have any trouble in sinking three fifty-one hundred and tens into his side, and then he gave it up.

Well, Clarence could not get over it at all. He simply couldn't figure it out how a man could shoot game with a rifle without sights. He had never used a shotgun and didn't savvy the "shoot where you look" theory, training your hands to point your gun at the object your eyes are looking at, *without really seeing your gun at all*.

Clarence killed another small bull a little farther down the creek and we butchered them both, quartered them all up nicely and hung them high in the branches of a tree. We brought back some liver and a chunk of tenderloin and told the old man he sure was out a new hat. He scratched his head and blinked his eyes, and finally realized that he had really lost his bet.

It had now stormed every day steadily for ten days and while we had not suffered any in the cabin with plenty to eat, it was a different story with the ponies. They had to dig for the bunch grass through three feet of snow, and they had suffered a lot from the chilling snow and piercing winds. They were getting thin and weak, and we all realized that very soon we must make a break and go down to the lower country or we would lose some of them.

On the eleventh morning, it broke clear and very cold, and we determined to go down to the valley below.

The Papoose trail in those days was mighty dim in spots and was not blazed, and after ten days of terrific winter weather it was a thing of the past so far as following it was concerned. We simply had to ignore it entirely, and work our way down the steep ledges, taking the best break as it came, ever travelling down in the direction of the Clark's Fork Valley. Sometimes we were forced to plunge into and through snowdrifts deeper than a horse's head, but luckily we had a downhill pull and that makes a big difference when it comes to travelling through snow. I went ahead on foot, leading my saddle pony, breaking trail, then followed the pack ponies and then Clarence and Old Man Gilbert. We had

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with us the head of one elk and the meat from two and quite a lot of chuck, beds, etc.

The Gilberts wanted to go to Red Lodge after provisions, so when we got down to the Clark's Fork River, they hung up their meat in trees and we continued on down the river, figuring on stopping for the night at Joe Lewis' cabin about ten miles down the river.

We could not get to Red Lodge by the Van Dyke trail over which I had come, for the storm had put an end to that for that winter, so we had to take the long route following the river out through the Clark's Fork Cañon, and so on around the foot hills to Red Lodge.

We hit Joe Lewis' bottom land about four-thirty. It was getting colder every minute. Already we figured it ten below zero, but we felt sure that old Dave Fleming would take us in and give us a warm spot to spend the night in. But "Old Dave" was a funny old stick. He had been too much alone, and had queer slants to his nature. Sometimes he was talkative and affable and full of the joy of life; at other times morose, distant and cold.

Well, we figured without our host this evening, for when we hit Lewis' cabin and Dave opened the door, we soon saw by the shadow on his face that his "medicine" was bad and he did not even ask us to stop.

This was a bitter disappointment to us, for it was a bitter night, and a cabin looked mighty good to us. His refusal to ask us to stop was a breach of one of the most fundamental laws of mountain etiquette. It was unforgivable. But we made up our minds that if he was that sort of an old scout, why we guessed we would rather stick it out in the tall timber, even if we did have to battle all night to keep from freezing to death.

We pulled on down the river about six miles to a burnt piece of bottom land where there was some good bunch grass and plenty of firewood, and fixed up a small lean-to shelter tent. We built a big fire in front, got up a lot of snags and dead logs for the night fire, cooked a good supper and then fought the night through with the temperature about thirty-five below. The stars shone like diamonds, the trees creaked and the wind whined. We slept but little, as we had to keep the fire going strong, but at last the stars became dim and the sun rose again. We laboriously packed up again with our panyards and ropes as stiff as raw hide and finally wound our way down past Doc Dilworth's cabin and down the river bars out of the Cañon and late that night pulled into Red Lodge.

I had only a five point elk and a Stetson hat to show for my three weeks in the mountains, but we



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had fought out the fiercest storm that country ever knew and had gained that hardihood and that self-reliance that only real experience with nature in her more strenuous moods can give a man.

## XI

### AFTER GRIZZLIES IN THE SHOSHONE COUNTRY, WYOMING

WHILE hunting with Van Dyke in the upper Clark's Fork country, I heard of a fellow by the name of Ned Frost, who had a ranch on the North Fork of the Stinking Water (Indian name for the Shoshone River), who had quite a reputation as a hunter of big game and who had killed quite a number of grizzlies. So early one spring, I drifted down along the foot of the mountains and met Frost at Cody, Wyoming, and we soon arranged to go out in the hills and try to capture a grizzly or two.

Ned was one of the "Go-gettingest" hunters I ever was out with. At that time, he was about twenty-seven years old, stood about five feet eight and must have weighed about one hundred and seventy pounds. He had blue eyes and light sandy hair. He never smoked, nor drank, not even coffee or tea. He was always a "good fellow" and had a happy disposition. In those days he never knew

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what it was to get tired climbing mountains. Many a day I've seen him climb from sunrise till after dark (and dark means about ten P.M. in the spring-time) and come in without showing the slightest trace of being tired. He always made it a practice to lie down and have a short nap after eating his noonday snack. He claimed that helped him maintain his vigor.

When climbing mountains (unless for some special reason), he made it a practice never to stop until he got to the top. His theory was never hurry and never stop—and believe me that's a good theory to tie to. He always wore fairly heavy boots. When I asked him why, he said he believed that a heavy boot maintained the rhythm of walking better than a light one. I've heard other men say the same thing—something similar to the weight on a locomotive wheel.

Ned said that we would be up in the mountains till late in the night, all the time, and that we would not have time to do any cooking, so he suggested taking Dennis Bloom along to keep our "mulligans" going.

Shortly after sunrise next morning, we left Cody and wound our way up through the famous Shoshone Cañon (now the site of the Shoshone Dam) and on up the North Fork trail and camped that

night with Ned's family at the ranch. Here we added a couple of more pack horses and some extra grub to our outfit and again hit it up country. We made our main camp in the Elk Fork basin near Cabin Creek. We just about got our tent up and a fire going when snow began to pepper down and the weather turned cold and dark. Next day it was still snowing and we hunted the high, steep slopes to the south of us, but nothing save a few deer and elk seemed to be moving. Seven or eight inches of fresh snow now lay on the ground and we looked on it with favor, knowing that in a day or so the weather would break and then old Mr. Bear would have to show us where he was bound for.

Every mountain section seems to have an old grizzly by the name of Four Toes. The Elk Fork country was no exception. For many years the North Fork country had heard reports of the killings of the above mentioned gentlemen. In a day or so, we hit his trail headed across the North Fork River, and piling into that yellow, surging stream, our horses swimming and stumbling over the boulders, we made the north side and trailed him for about five miles. We saw where he had cleaned up the remains of an old range horse that had died out in the hills but finally lost his trail in

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the rocky breaks to the north. Night was fast approaching, and we had many miles to ride to camp. We hit the river about nine o'clock, and in the yellow light of the moon we did not notice that during the time we had been trailing old Four Toes, the water had risen about three feet. Spurring our ponies, we leaped in, and in a second were all but swallowed up by the galloping waves. Ned was riding a "bronc" and when the pony failed to hit bottom with his feet, he went crazy, rolling completely over in the water and forcing Ned to quit him. When he came up Ned grabbed his tail and down the river they went, Ned yelling to me to hang to my horse. I, too, slipped out of my saddle and held to the horse with one hand. With the other I tried to guide him to the other bank, but it seemed as if we would never get there, as the torrent was heavy and travelling with racing speed. I remember I wondered if this was going to be the end of us, and thought what an uncertain game this life was. Apart from our horses, we wouldn't have had much chance, but I reflected on the strength of a horse and made up my mind that if I could just stick to the saddle horn my pony would win through.

We went down stream about a hundred yards before we were able to get to the far bank and

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scramble up to dry land. I think we both offered up a silent prayer, thanking God for getting out alive. But such happenings as that are really but incidents in the life of a mountain man, and by the time we made camp, we had all but forgotten it, and were thinking of a mulligan stew and coffee and pie, which were speedily dished out by our dear old cook, Denny Bloom.

Denny was a strange old scout, with a strong strain of melancholy in his nature. I remember he would sit by the hour singing sad, old-time ballads. He never spoke much of his past and I often wondered what strange events had taken the sunshine from his mind. While singing, he would often whittle and was really very good at it. In a day or so he'd perform the miracle of changing a stick into a beautiful chain of wood, every link unbroken and perfectly linked to each other.

Next morning Ned and I rolled out early, determining to give old Four Toes another whirl. Snow was still several inches deep on the ground and when we got down within a half mile of the river, we noticed a trail going up a hogback to the east of us. We rode over to have a look and much to our surprise, it had been made by our old friend, Four Toes. He was headed for the high ridges that lay between Elk Fork and the South Fork country.

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We thought perhaps he would stop and feed some place and decided to stay with his trail aways and see what would happen.

For several miles, he kept straight on up and up, then the trail dipped down onto a little park and there we noticed the snow all mussed up and going nearer we saw pieces of an old mackinaw jacket lying around and then an old cap torn to threads. We were mystified and couldn't figure it out. I told Ned we had better watch out, as we could see what had happened to the last man that had met old Four Toes on the trail.

We studied it out for quite some time. There were no footprints of a man about, only his clothing. The bear had seemingly found these clothes laying there and out of pure devilment or some such emotion, had torn them all to threads. We guessed that some prospector or trapper had lost them off his saddle, but it remained a mystery.

We could now see the country for miles ahead and getting out the glasses, we sat and looked and looked to see if we could locate Old Bruin in some of the deep valleys lying in front of us, but nothing stirred and so we had our bite of lunch and then trailed him to where we could see that he had crossed the Elk Fork Divide. We decided we had better wait for him to circle back, and maybe we would meet up with him

## After Grizzlies in Wyoming 191

again. But he never showed up on our side of the divide that entire springtime.

We had a couple of cold, windy days and nothing seemed to be about. Ned was getting a bit impatient at not seeing more bear and he said one morning: "I'm going to make a big circle today and try and locate something." He told me to hunt the headwaters of Cabin Creek where it was warm and sunny and that he'd make the big circle alone, and so he hit it out. I put in the day along the rim of Cabin Creek, but I saw no bear sign. About nine o'clock Ned came in quite animated, saying he had seen grizzly sign on a divide north and east of us.

Saddling up early next morning, we rode down Elk Fork several miles, crossed it, rode up a ridge about three miles, tied up our ponies and took it afoot, watching closely for sign. We climbed this ridge clean up above timber line, but saw no tracks. Then we dropped down the divide a half mile and stopped for lunch at the foot of a snow bank. We then had a little nap and watched over the lower country for an hour or so more.

Slowly we made our way down the ridge, watching everywhere with hawk-like scrutiny. Another half mile further, we saw sign and getting up to it saw it had been made by a couple of young grizzlies. They had fed there but a few hours ago. A little farther



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along another of about the same size had joined them. We were some keyed up by this time, every nerve strung taut with expectancy. We knew that we must not snap a twig, or slip, or cough, or all might be lost. Bent close to the ground, "ooching" from tree to tree, we followed the trails winding here and there downward through the pines.

Below us not a great ways from the Elk Fork River was a heavy growth of poplars and into this the trail ran. Ned took the glasses and carefully scanned the ridges all around the poplars, but nowhere could he see where the bears had come out. He said the bears were surely there and told me to quickly make a big circle, going back up the ridge and then dropping around gradually until I was below them. Then, pick out a good place from which I could see the entire lower end of the tree patch, and wait until he came slowly down from above, when the bears would surely come my way.

Well, they came all right, for Ned had hardly made the first stick snap at the upper end of the poplars when it seemed to me that a grizzly stepped from behind every tree. There were actually three grizzlies there and they were excited themselves, for I think they had heard Ned, and had winded me, and they were "nonplussed," as old Uncle Billy used to say.



Denny Bloom, Ned Frost and Our Three Grizzlies



They just tore around among the trees like angry lions in a cage. They didn't dare leave the timber, but they surely did move about some there! One ran right out towards me and suddenly turning his head in Ned's direction, stopped dead still. He wasn't over seventy-five steps from me and right there I handed him a ticket for bear heaven. Then I saw the other two moving like shadows among the trees and taking careful aim, fired at the nearest one. He flinched but did not go to the ground. Ned, by this time, was tearing down to me pointing at a bear which I could not see and yelling for me to shoot him. In a minute I saw the second bear again and shot at him again and knocked him down, but he got up again and crawled down towards the creek. The third bear never did give me a shot at him and somehow got away without either of us seeing him clearly enough to shoot.

We had one down, and I was sure the second one would not go far. Mighty carefully we trailed him for about one hundred and fifty yards, expecting him to jump out from every tree we passed. A few more steps and we heard a growl and then saw him making his last stand under a pine tree, not thirty feet away. I dropped on my knee, and waited until he came lunging out and put him fast asleep. We were happy boys when we came back to camp that night,

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for we had two of the prettiest young silvertips I believe I ever saw—both just alike.

Several evenings later, up near Rampart Creek, we picked up the trail of another medium-sized grizzly. He had been feeding on the fresh herbage growing on the steep mountain side, and had apparently gone into a thick patch of timber for a nap. We decided to get up above him on a high point of rocks, where we could see him at once should he leave the timber. We sat there and watched, and whispered to each other, and all the time shivering with cold, for it was then getting late. The sun had slid down behind the peaks and the intense chill of early spring was upon us.

Six o'clock came and still nothing stirred. We were sure chilly. We decided to stick it out for another fifteen minutes and then beat it back to camp, which was about an hour's ride down to the Creek. At just eleven minutes past six, we saw a brown object gliding slowly out of the timber. We saw him stop and sniff and look all around, then, apparently satisfied, he started to feed around among the fallen timber on the bottoms. All we had to do was to slip along the rim rock we were on until we got abreast of him, and then lie down prone and point that little end right. It took three shots before he stayed down for good. We slid down to

where he lay and found him to be another three-year-old grizzly with an unusually colored pelt,—dark reddish brown, with the tip of the hairs slightly grey. He wasn't as pretty as the two silvertips, but was in excellent shape. We soon peeled off his hide and went joyfully on our way to camp.

We hunted several days longer, but saw no more bear; they seemed to have left the open hillsides and gone higher up into the thick timber. So we pulled out for home—well satisfied with our trip.

## XII

### THE BIG CINNAMON OF CRANDALL CREEK

My old hunting pard, Horace Mullendore, had now moved to Cody, Wyoming, and so another spring-time found me there with him, all packed up and ready to go to the Upper Crandall Creek country for more bear. We got Jake Henderson to come along and bake cornbread for us, and keep us laughing around the campfire with yarns of his zigzag trail through life.

As there was an old wagon trail up over Dead Indian Hill and up the south side of the Upper Clark's Fork River to the fork of Crandall and Timber creeks, we decided to pile all our outfit in a dead X wagon and let Jake drive it up and we would ride alongside with the pack ponies. When Jake went down "Dead Indian Hill," it was still a beaver slide from top to bottom, and besides roping fast all his wheels, he had to chop a big tree and drag that along behind as an extra brake. This was done as a regular thing by every outfit that freighted over Dead In-



Mullendore and the Author



Horace Looks 'em Over





## Big Cinnamon of Crandall Creek 197

dian, and piled up at the foot of the hill were dozens of big trees dragged there by wagons coming over. We camped finally after three days' travel at the forks of Timber and Crandall Creeks. Snow lay very deep that spring, and we could get out from camp only a short way before we encountered deep snowdrifts. Every day we spent out on the high ridges, scanning the valleys all about for a sight of bruin.

One day we came on the remains of a deer that seemed to have been killed by a timber wolf or mountain lion so we circled around in the timber where the snow still lay, and there we saw the tracks of a grizzly bear and her cub. We figured that she would surely come to the deer carcass that night, or early the next morning, so we slipped away and decided to go back to camp, get a little chuck and some blankets and come back and "siwash" it to where the deer lay.

Timber Creek was running high. Old dead trees and brush splashed by in the yellow flood, and we had quite a time to find a good ford, but we finally did, and camped on the other side in a little park on the river bank. We hobbled our ponies, fixed up a kind of human nest under a big tree, left out blankets and a handful of chuck and slipped on up to where the dead deer lay. It was in quite thick timber and

## 198 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

we could not stay the proper distance away and see the carcass. We had to be within seventy-five yards of it to see it and we knew we were really too near for a bear to come, but we thought we'd take a chance, and so, lying down in a clump of bushes, we waited till dark. Nothing showed up—and when it grew too dark to shoot we slipped down the river and “siwashed” for the night.

Before it was really daylight next morning, we were again approaching the dead deer and we decided that the chances of the bear being at the carcass were very good, but the chances of our getting near enough to shoot were very poor, as the timber was so thick. There was nothing to do but to make a still hunt to it and take a chance. It came out just as we figured, for as we caught sight of the deer carcass, we also caught a glimpse of a couple of grizzlies springing away to the timber. We shot a couple of times, but really hadn't a chance to hit anything. We decided then that we were just wasting our time in such a place, and made up our minds to go back to the high, open country where we could see about.

When we got back to our “siwash” camp, we found that my pony was alone and that Horace's was missing. He was hobbled, and we felt sure he could not have swam the river with hobbles on;—but his trail led to the river and nowhere else.

## Big Cinnamon of Crandall Creek 199

So there was nothing to do but for me to wait until Horace had taken my pony and gone and captured his. That big old-blazed-faced sorrel had gotten homesick for some other horse that was back at our main camp and had piled right into Timber Creek with hobbles on, swam across and beat it clear back to camp about seven miles down the country. So the better part of the day was wasted getting him back. We finally got back to our main camp and then had a spell of snowstorms, which kept us in for three days more.

After supper on the third day, it was still snowing a soft wet snow and great pools of snow-water lay all about. It was sure a mean night, but I had a hunch that we would see a bear up at the foot of a big rim rock that divided Clark's Fork and Timber Creek. Several days before, we had noticed the dried up carcass of a steer lying in an open park just under the rim. I recalled that my friend, Charley Russell, the painter of western life, had said that bears always loved to splash around in wet snow and rain, if it was not too cold, and I said to Horace: "This is one of the nights that Charley Russell says the bears like, so let's amble up to the foot of the rim rock and see if we can't see one."

We went afoot, as it was only about a mile and a half away, a steady climb up till we hit the flat where

## 200 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

the park lay. We were slipping along very slowly, now out on the edge of the open park, our eyes alert for every object that did not look right, and soon I saw, moving along in the timber in the shadow of the rim rock wall, a black bear, and then, following a little further in the shadows, a huge brown bear. We were standing right out in plain sight and of course the bears could see us. We stood dead still, not daring to bat an eye-lid. The bears seemed to have scented the old steer carcass and were circling around to see if it was safe to approach.

They went to the south end of the timber and disappeared, but we felt sure they would come back. We knew we were in a far too conspicuous position, standing out in the open, but we also knew it would be fatal to make a step. We knew we should slowly sink to a sitting position and stay just where we were, but at our feet was a foot of snow water, which didn't make the finest kind of a seat—and we knew we ought to sit down slowly, very slowly. So we lowered ourselves into the water and there we sat for twenty minutes with every nerve tense, watching for the bear to show up again.

At the end of twenty minutes, when it was getting almost too dark to shoot, the black bear ambled out of the timber, took a sniff and a look and came out to the steer. He was not eighty yards away, but we

## Big Cinnamon of Crandall Creek 201

didn't want him; we wanted the big old boy still in the shadows. We hardly dared breathe for fear the black bear would hear us, give a snort, and beat it, warning the big bear at the same time.

In a minute or two, from the darkness at the lower end of the park, a huge brown form appeared, and we knew the crisis had arrived. Would he wind us? Would he come to the carcass? He was still too far off to shoot. The black bear saw him, saw him start toward the bait, and then he decided it was no place for him, so he loped away into the timber to the north.

The big old boy was mighty leary. The wind did not smell just right to him, and yet his stomach had called for food. He kept to the edge of the timber, circling nearer the carcass, then he started directly to it, but only came about twenty yards and stopped again. Then sniffing again, he decided definitely that he would not dine till later, and started back north to the timber. I felt sure that he had winded us and that it was now or never. He was walking fast, so I slowly moved my rifle up to a knee-rest and holding low at the front of his chest, I squeezed the trigger. With a spring and a roar he went into the air, somersaulting and clawing everything in reach. After my first shot, I jumped up and ran full speed to him. Horace came along and told me to watch out and not go in too close, as he was big

## 202 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

and sounded bad, but all I thought about was that he must not get away. We ran up close, saw him try to spring at us, and both shot together, putting him out for good. He was a huge Cinnamon with a big square head and short ears. His pelt was prime, the hair almost six inches long.

We surely had an exciting half hour—one of the tensest I every experienced. We had patience, and had stuck, and had won out, and were sure a happy pair that night going back to tell Jake all about it.

We hunted a few days more but failed to see any more bear and as spring work on the range was ready to start, we loaded up our outfit and rambled down out of God's country.

## CHAPTER XIII

### BEAR HUNTING AMONG THE PEAKS OF DEAD INDIAN

WHEN my pard, Horace Mullendore, and I were going into the Crandall Creek country the spring before, we paused a few moments at the crest of Dead Indian Hill and marvelled at the beauty of the country lying to the south of us, the headwaters of Dead Indian Creek. Here, lying like great ocean waves, were hundreds of snow covered peaks, surrounded by deep timbered valleys and grassy hillsides. We both thought that it sure must be *some* bear country and we decided to give it a try-out on our next spring's hunt.

Horace made a trip into this wonderful country before I arrived and had picked out a permanent camp, and left his outfit and tents and pack ponies there in charge of his son, Frank. He was anxious not to lose any time after I pulled into Cody in getting to camp and getting started on the hunt. It was a two days' trip with a pack outfit, but we could make it in one with just our saddle ponies.



## 204 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

Horace had willed that the big hunt start immediately, but nature had other designs, for when he and I and our cookie, Charley Davis, had made it as far as Bald Ridge, snow began to pepper down. Charley said he knew a fellow who had a sheep camp nearby and that he would lope over there and get a piece of mutton, and bring it into camp. Horace told him where camp lay, and said we'd ride along slowly and he could catch up with us.

We did not think much about the snow when it first started; thought it just a little mountain zephyr, but when we got up to the top of Bald Ridge, we were literally swallowed up and enveloped by one of the worst blizzards I had ever ridden in. We could not see our ponies' ears. We couldn't hear each other holler, and we had to ride knee to knee to keep from losing each other. We had no bedding and no grub, and not any too much clothing, and we had about seven miles to go, so we just had to make it through somehow. Luckily, Horace had just come back over this country and with the true instinct of a good mountain man, had let the contour of the country, the lay of the land, become impressed upon his memory, and this was all that saved us; for to find a couple of tents, hidden seven miles away in the fastness of a mountain valley when the snow is so thick and the wind so piercing that you can hardly

open your eyes, and when you did, could hardly see your horse's ears, is quite a man-sized job. You've got to hold your head, have faith in yourself—in your inherent sense of direction, and go on. As long as I live, I shall never forget the thrill, the strain and the ultimate joy of those three hours of blizzard riding in the valley of Dead Indian. Horace was a hard man to baffle. He was too good an animal; he had fought nature all his life, and won, and he was not going to lose out this time. Depending almost entirely upon his memory of the way the ground lay and where timber was and was not, he went over Bald Ridge, down through the timber, in and out of parks and down on to a piece of bottom land. He found the direction of the water in the creek and knew camp was somewhere in the direction the water was flowing. He followed this stream down several miles until it narrowed up into a draw. He knew the camp was on a little park just about a half mile up the mountain side from this draw, so rode up through the timber again, came out to the edge of a park, and here we heard a horse bell tinkle. I never heard a more welcome sound in my life. We spurred our ponies down through the park, saw more ponies, and faintly, very faintly, almost like a dream, we saw the shimmer of our camp fire, and in a second more we had crawled off our ponies and literally hugged that

## 206 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

fire to our half frozen bodies. I have thrilled at many home comings, but that night, that little camp and that blazing camp fire appeared to me like the door of Heaven opening out of Hell.

Frank was sure tickled to see us ride in, and soon had our insides filled with warm food and drink. We kept the fire going way late into the night, thinking Charley Davis might be trying to find camp also. But the storm had hit him just as he had reached the sheep wagon, and not knowing the country, he knew he never would have a chance; so he rolled in with the sheep herder and never showed up until the third day, when the storm broke.

Snow now lay about three feet on the level and much deeper in the drift, and for about a week we could get about but little. Then it warmed up again and we knew bear would be moving, snow or no snow.

We broke a trail through the deep snow over to the rim rock on the north side of Dead Indian Creek. From here we could see over a lot of country and also just at the foot of the rim rock the sun had melted the snow, and long shoots of green grass and wild roots were springing up. We figured that if any bear were moving about, they would sure hit this nice, warm spot and camp awhile. Twice a day we visited the rim rock, but not until the fourth day did we see any sign. It was about four-thirty when we looked

over at our little green hillside, and then we saw signs. We thought first it was a coyote, but going down to have a good look, we found out that mixed up with the coyote tracks were just a few tracks of one real "ole time bear," with feet on him like a negro seven feet tall! He had been out on that hillside just a little while before, taken a few mouthfuls and had gone back into the timber. We felt positive he would come out again most any minute, so we slipped back in on the top of the rim, and every fifteen minutes came to the edge and looked over.

Outside of the little green patch where the sun had struck, snow lay two feet deep all about, and it was still mighty chilly just the minute Old Sol ducked behind the peaks. And we sure were wishing that the bear would show up quickly.

At five forty-five it was my turn to look. I crept to the edge, carefully and slowly peered over and viewed our little wild root garden. Nothing stirring. I was about to turn back in disgust when my eyes caught a large brown object lying half buried in the snow about forty yards in front of the green patch. It did not move. It did not look like anything in particular, except it did not fit in with the rest of the landscape. I had a hunch it had not been there before. It was just at the edge of some pines and was in somewhat of a shadow. I beckoned

## 208 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

Horace to come with the glasses and just a glance through them showed a great big Cinnamon lying flat on his belly, his head down on his paws. I handed Horace the glasses very carefully, took a prone position, and aiming my forty-five-ninety carbine where I thought his heart ought to be, I touched her off. The bear made a tremendous leap backwards, turning clear around, and roaring like a mad bull. I fired twice more and he was gone down into the pines.

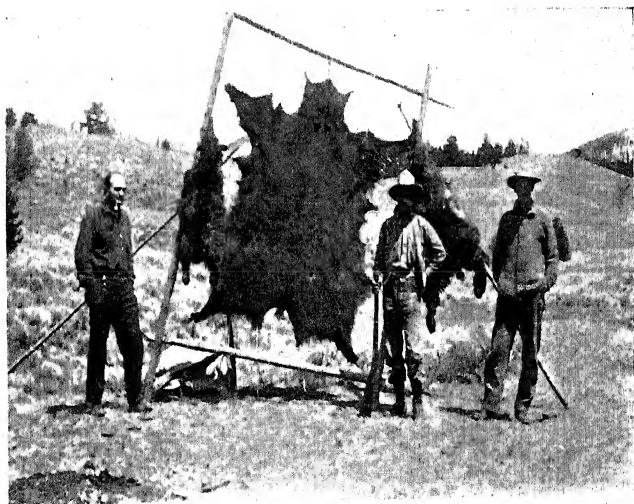
"My Lord, you missed him!" Horace said.

I said: "Not on your life, old boy; that bear didn't stop, but if I didn't hit him, I'll throw the gun away and go to knitting."

We slid down off the rim rock, and crossed over to where he had lain when I shot him. There was not a drop of blood anywhere to be seen. Horace now was certain I never touched him, but I felt sure that my aim was right when I touched it off. Right at the edge of the pines we first saw blood. Just a few drops. Fifteen yards further, it lay in pools. Horace by this time was patting me on the shoulder and was as excited as a young buck Indian at a war dance. We both knew now that he was our bear. He couldn't go far in that damaged shape. A few steps more, and there he lay on his back, his great paws in the air, stone dead. We



When the Storm Broke



Charley Davis, Horace and Frank Mullendore and Our Pelts



never had seen a larger or fatter Cinnamon. His pelt was perfect. We sure were a happy pair there in the shadow of the pines, peeling off his great hide.

It was quite dark when we staggered up to our camp fire with the hide and meat, and heard Charley Davis say: "Well, I'll be damned! I just knew you fellows were up to some sort of devilment tonight."

Next morning we all went back to the carcass and cut off a lot of bear-tallow. It lay solidly on his back, four inches thick. We brought this and more meat to camp.

The next morning we saddled up early. We aimed to go down and cross Dead Indian Creek and up the other slopes beyond, but while crossing the creek bottom, we saw signs of two bear, ambling up a little tributary of the Dead Indian. Their tracks showed that they were travelling slowly. Here and there they stopped to tear a log or turn a rock, hunting for ants.

We decided we had better back up and climb up on a high point of rocks that overlooked the country they were in, and sit there and watch a while. We had no sooner tied our ponies up to trees, when we heard a noise from the creek bottom below, like sticks popping. I ran to the edge of the point to look down, when running full speed towards me,



## 210 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

his tongue hanging out, came a two-year-old bear as yellow as a cat. That was a great surprise package but don't think I was the only one surprised, for when Mr. Bear saw me he turned completely round in the air without ever touching a toe-nail to the ground. I could just about touch him with the end of the rifle barrel as he turned broadside, and I managed to sink a slug at the butt of his left ear, and his surprises were over for good!

Knowing there was another gentleman some place I ran to the edge of the point and down in the timber at the creek bottom I saw another light-colored bear excitedly running here and there as if uncertain how to proceed. She was quite a distance away, not a sure shot by any means, but I sat down, took a knee rest, fired and missed. But seeing that the shot struck high, I got in another one before she tore off into the timber. We could hear her bawling, and knew she was hit; so, leaving the first bear where he lay, we slipped quickly down to the bottom and slowly crept up on the wounded one. Soon we saw her underneath some bushes. A couple of shots and her troubles were over. It was kind of a funny deal all the way through and we couldn't exactly figure just what had happened. Possibly a big grizzly had come along and scared the smaller bears, but we saw no sign of

anything. We peeled off the hides and rode back to camp feeling plumb satisfied with our day's work.

We hunted Dead Indian clear to its headwaters, saw quite a few sign of brown, black and grizzly bear, but never saw another out in the open, and on the twenty-first day of May, we decided we had done mighty well and should be plumb satisfied and so packed up and crossed Old Bald Ridge and went down to Cody.

## XIV

### GRIZZLY HUNTING AT FORTRESS LAKE

HAVING hunted several years in Montana and Wyoming I had a strong call to go up north and see what things looked like on the watersheds of the Athabasca, Fraser and Brazeau Rivers. A friend of mine had told me that he had been up on the Brazeau after sheep and had then heard that the headwaters of the Athabasca and Wood Rivers was fine bear country. He told me to get in touch with Otto Brothers at Jasper and they would lead me to them. So the following spring I wrote to them and got Clausson as my guide. We also had along as cook a ranch boy by the name of Fred Carritt. We had three saddle horses and five pack ponies, plenty of chuck, a small cook tent and a white man's tepee to sleep in.

I arrived at Jasper, Alberta, on May 4th, and when I clapped my eyes on Clausson, I said to myself, "Here's a real man." I saw strength, power, and grit sticking out all over him.

The trail to the Fortress Lake country follows the

## Grizzly Hunting at Fortress Lake 213

Athabasca River almost to its source, and is one of great interest and beauty. On both sides mountains rise to immense heights and with most majestic contour. This year they were heavily covered with snow, which, of course, made them doubly beautiful.

We knew we had worlds of time, for the snow was melted quite a bit, and the green grass hadn't thought of showing up yet, so we mooched along twelve or fifteen miles a day, enjoying the wonderful scenery, and now and then seeing bear sign. It was just half past two on the afternoon of the third day when I flashed my eyes across the river and saw something that had all the earmarks of a bear, and a big one at that. I stopped the outfit, called Clausson, and we got our glasses to work. Clausson called it a big old grizzly. He told the cook to hold the outfit, and Clausson and I slipped down to the river, forded it, tied our ponies and closed in on Mr. Grizzly. He was walking slowly through a little opening, headed for the thick jack pines. Time was precious and I was forced to shoot a little hurriedly, but managed to make a .45-90 slug connect some place. With a roar the old boy reared straight up, cuffing himself with his great paws—another shot knocked him down, but not to stay. He ducked into the heavy timber and seemed badly crippled. I felt sure we would come up to him, but Clausson didn't feel certain, he had

## 214 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

seen so many not vitally wounded get away. We trailed him by his blood for miles through the worst thickets imaginable—sometimes he bled profusely, then it would almost give out, and then he would stumble on a log and it would flow freely again. We followed him up to the snow line, his bleeding got less and less, and when he reached the crusted snow he left no trail of blood or toenail, and we very sadly passed him up and started back to our outfit.

We had run his trail with the "speed of great desire," and unheeding of our direction, so when we started back we did not know just where we were, so we followed a rocky cliff up to where we could have a look. We saw where we were, and also saw something that seemed too good to be true—another grizzly not over a half mile away below us, right on the road home. I made up my mind right then and there that if I ever got up to that old boy I would surely hold myself well in hand, and not shoot until I knew the little end was pointed right. We slid down through the slide in the rim rocked cliff, and crossing an open bog, were soon up to the old gentleman. When I raised my head over a little knoll, I saw him standing head on, looking straight at me, not over eighty yards off. I would rather have had him turn broadside, but he had seen me, and I knew I could not waste any time, so I sighted carefully for

the center of his chest and touched it off. With a bawl and a bound he came right on—another shot knocked him down for a second. But on he came not over thirty yards off—another shot and he was rolling at my feet, but like a flash he was up and at me again, and for five successive times he rose up and took a .45-90, bit the earth and came back again, and even then, with eight slugs under his pelt he would not die, but lay there snapping his teeth and snarling with rage. We stood there watching him, astounded at his wonderful vitality, thinking that any moment he might come up again, but he did not, and finally gave it up. As it was getting dark we left him until the morning, when we came back and peeled his hide off.

Two days later, late in the afternoon, we were hunting along the benchland at the foot of the mountains, when far up in a bunch of quaking aspens we saw a bear feeding, moving very little. First we thought it was a black bear, but as we got near we saw it was a female grizzly. We went up through the timber, with every nerve tensed against a false step and our eyes flashing here and there trying to spot Mrs. Bruin before she clapped her eyes on us. Clauson bade me keep dead still while he mooched out towards where the bear was and tried to locate her. He only made a step or two, when about seventy-five

## 216 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

yards above us on the mountain side we saw her walking towards a slide. I had to shoot quickly as she was fast leaving us. I watched for a little open space, steadied myself as much as possible, put the sight on her shoulder and pulled. With a cry of rage she came crashing down through the brush straight at Clausson (I had told him that if he was ever in danger to go ahead and shoot, but not otherwise). But now he was in a tight place, and I heard his .33 Winchester crack, and saw Mrs. Grizzly bite the earth. The brush was very thick, and I could not see to shoot from where I stood, so I hurried on up the mountain side to get in above her, in order to see what was going on. When I got there I could see her; to my surprise she was up again on all fours, apparently full of fight and growling incessantly. I closed in quite close to her and pulled off a very exciting finish. She lunged at me three times, and each time received a .45-90; then she gave in. She had a beautiful pelt, long, silky and distinctly a silvertip. We were very happy. We had had an exciting stalk, and a swift and successful finish.

Next day we pulled on up to where the trail ended, about a quarter of a mile east of Fortress Lake, camping in snow about three feet deep. After getting our tepee set up and having a hasty supper, we took a stroll up to the lake to see what the chances were of

## Grizzly Hunting at Fortress Lake 217

getting through with a canoe to the head of Wood River, which was the destination we had in mind. But in this we were to be disappointed, for the ice was still two feet thick on the lake, without a break any place. We then thought we might go over the ice with the pack outfit, but soon found that this, too, could not be done, as the ice was full of airholes and spots of slush ice, so our only alternative was to stay on the east side of the divide.

On our way back to the camp we saw where a big grizzly had crossed our trail in the deep snow; followed it a short distance and then swung up the steep mountain side. In the morning we packed up and moved down-stream a short distance and made camp again, where we were handy to a couple of good-looking grassy slides upon which the bear are so fond of feeding during the first few weeks after coming out of their dens.

Several nights later we were just about to return to camp, not having seen any bear appear on the slides, when I happened to cast my eyes down towards the river and popped them right on a good-sized cinnamon, strolling along about a half mile north of us. He was headed for the heavy timber and did not seem to be losing much time on the way, so we had to move some to head him off. It was a sure enough obstacle race, for in front of us was a maze



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of dead jack pines, thousands of them in all directions; but a man can do some wonderful things when making a run on game—so in a very few minutes we were in front of Mr. Bruin's line of advance, and, crawling up on a little knoll, looked over and saw him feeding about seventy-five yards away. We lay still and watched him for several minutes, as he was working our way all the time. Then, when he seemed right on top of us, we added him to our string. We now had three.

A few evenings after this we were sitting high up on the side of the mountain, watching a slide below us, when Clausson spied an old she-bear and two yearlings working along the edge of the timber headed our way. We stepped quickly down the mountain side and met them in a dark gorge. It was pretty dark, but I picked out the old bear and turned loose in a moment. It seemed that the place was alive with bear, for the yearlings were right near the old bear and all jumped together. I fired three or four more shots and then ran down to gather up the game, but could see nothing in sight, and for a few moments thought I had missed the whole works, but soon we heard a noise near where I first opened up on them and, going over, found the old lady cashing in her chips. It was now plumb dark, so we awaited morning before skinning her.



The Big Old One Which Died So Hard



Claussen Otto and Author with Bear Pelts



## Grizzly Hunting at Fortress Lake 219

The very next night Claussou was looking through his binoculars and picked up another black bear high up the mountain-slide, almost at the foot of the rim rock. We had a hard climb of about three-fourths of a mile straight up, and finally crawled out on a point of rocks overlooking the little green basin where we had seen him. There we spied him feeding, almost hidden in a washout. He was so near us that I knew he would smell us any minute, so I shot hurriedly and missed him clean, but he had to make quite a run in the open before getting in the brush, and I winged him while running at full speed, with a shot which turned him over like a rabbit. He had the silkiest fur of any black bear I had ever shot, and was as fat as a hog.

On our way home we saw another big black bear with a white mark on his breast, the first one I had seen, and I think it denotes age. I came within an ace of getting a shot at him, but the darkness saved his bacon for a few nights. He was a big old boy and we wanted him, so we watched carefully for a couple of nights and were finally rewarded by seeing him come out to feed on the carcass of one of the bears previously killed. He came through a patch of quaking asps. I saw him coming, and slipped quickly down and was ready for him when he stepped out. He came out of the brush, looked all around,

## 220 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

sniffled a time or two and then came on, one step and then another, and then he was right for me to shoot and I got him with one shot through the neck. He was a whale of a black bear and very old.

When we came in for supper that night the cook wanted to know if we were going to have a bear every night for supper. We now had two grizzlies, one cinnamon and three blacks, six in all, which was going strong, and as we thought we had killed about all that were on the slides near camp, we decided to pull up stakes and move over to another creek, where we had seen some grizzly signs.

During the past few days we had done a lot of hard walking, so in the morning we decided to hop the ponies and ride down the creek. We rode along easily, searching every foot of ground on which we might see signs. We saw the fresh track of an old grizzly she-bear and cub, also a large black or cinnamon bear, all heading in our direction, so we became alert and watched closely in all directions. In a few minutes I saw a moving black spot, just a little way in front of us, and soon saw a small black bear feeding about in a poplar brake. She was working along at the foot of a ridge and I saw immediately that the move for us to make was to quit the ponies and climb the ridge and get in around ahead of the bear. This we did quicker than it takes to write it, and when we

peered over the ridge and still saw the bear very near, we knew we had the cards all in our hands. We chose an advantageous place to shoot from and waited for the bear to come out of the gulch she was in. This she did, walking in our direction. Everything had worked out just right, and the time had arrived to pull off the climax, which I did with one carefully placed shot in the neck. She was small, but had a wonderfully long and silky pelt. We skinned her out, left her hide in a pine tree, and continued on down the creek. We ran into a bunch of young goats which were feeding on the tender grass on the bluffs along the river.

We had had our bite of lunch, and Clausson had strolled over the ridge to where he could see a slide, when suddenly I heard him whisper, "Mack!"

I slipped quickly over to him and he said he had seen a big bear moving along through the brush at the foot of the slide. We worked quickly down off the ridge, crossed a gulch and took the edge of the pine timber until opposite to where Clausson thought the bear was. Then Clausson stepped carefully out behind an old stump, and looked and waited and in a few minutes beckoned to me and showed me the bear. He was feeding about in a very dense bunch of willows, and I could just see him passing here and there although never near enough to shoot. I had to wait

## 222 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

until he showed up in some open spot. This he soon did, coming out on an old bear trail and standing upright and clapping his big paws together, just as if he was trying to catch mosquitoes. He came right my way and I steadied myself to shoot. He must have received my intention by wireless, for quickly he dropped on all fours and started for a bunch of willows, but it was too late, for I was ready for any move and put two slugs under his pelt in quick succession. He never winced or even bawled, but came straight across in front of me, where all of a sudden he pitched forward, turned a somersault and passed in his chips. We ran up to him and found him to be an extra large and fine-pelted cinnamon. This added two more pelts to our string, and next day we pointed back-country and in three days were back in Jasper.

## XV

### THE WHITE RAMS OF THE KENAI

ALASKA has always had a lure for me. It is our last real frontier, and many big-game animals still live there in abundance, so it truly is a land of romance and adventure. When, a few years ago, some friends of mine in the East got me interested in some gold and platinum claims up in that country, I determined to get hold of my old friend, John P. Holman, and go up and have a look at the placer claims, and also take a crack at the famous white rams inhabiting the Kenai peninsula.

We pulled out of Seattle early in August on the good ship, *Alameda*. It seemed as if we were in a different world as we wound our way up through the "Inside Passage"—that beautiful stretch of water lying along the northwest coast for a thousand miles or more. Every once in a while, we would tie up to a wharf at some little settlement, go ashore for a little while, viewing the Indians, shops, totem



## 224 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

poles, canneries, etc., then we would go again until the next port was reached. Nobody seemed to be in a hurry, everybody seemed happy, and on the steamer the broadest sort of fellowship existed. We were fortunate in meeting some real old "Sourdoughs" and we put in many pleasant hours in the smoking cabin listening to their tales of the Northland.

I remember the day we left the Inside Passage and slipped out to the open sea. We were out about twenty miles, I guess, when the engines stopped and then we floated for an hour or so like a cork on the sea. But nobody seemed to worry. Most of the passengers had seen it happen before and before very long, we heard the grateful sound of the engines again and two days following, we slowly wound our way up the bay to Seward, our outfitting point for our sheep hunt.

Some friends of ours had recommended a couple of hunters, Ben Sweasy and Andy Simons, to guide us to the land of the white rams, and when we pulled in to the dock, dear old Ben was there to welcome us. Ben was originally from somewhere in the New England States, but had been out on the big frontier so long that he had become a real old-time "sourdough." He was really a wonderful character—patient, kind, humorous, wise and as tough as rawhide—a man to

## The White Rams of the Kenai 225

tie to in a tight place—a man to enjoy in the glow of the camp fire.

Going up to our hotel we met Andy Simons, one of the most successful guides in Alaska, of Norwegian descent, medium size, heavy set, strong and tireless as a young bull with an unsatiable love of hunting, and yes, the most important thing, he had a merry twinkle in his eyes. Then there were our two packers—Tom Finnegan and Walter Lodge. Finnegan was a young, strapping Irishman, with blue eyes and light, reddish hair—witty, magnetic, and a bull for work. Lodge was small, wiry, brainy, efficient—a hundred per cent outdoor man at any job you gave him.

We got together our chuck and plunder, moved it over to the little depot of the new government railroad and next day boarded the one car train and risked our lives going over the crooked tracks and flimsy trestles to “Roosevelt” at mile 23. Here we saw spread before us Kenai Lake, out of which ran the Kenai River some twenty miles further to the north. We hired a launch from Fred Bunce, and he took us down to the head of Kenai River, where we camped for the night.

In the morning, we loaded all our plunder in Ben’s thirty-four foot double-end riverboat, and starting the Evinrude motor, we were on our way down the

## 226 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

Kenai. For three or four miles it was smooth going, then it dropped off into the upper rapids and with the Evinrude going, and Ben steering with a long "sweep" oar, we soon made "Russian River" our next camping place. Here were some old buildings, a half dozen or so, used many years ago by an expedition of Russian miners and trappers. They were situated on an immense flat, running from Kenai River to the foothills. The river was very low and dead, and half-dead salmon were everywhere in sight and in the wind. It looked like a great place for bear to feed, but we saw no signs as they were probably high up in the berry patches at that time of the year. John and I both went out with our guides for a look around, but outside of seeing millions of mosquitos and flies, we saw no other game of any kind. John's eyes and lips were terribly swollen and from then on for several weeks we bathed only in fly dope.

Next day we again unmoored our river boat and started on the wildest ride of our lives. Ben and Andy never said a word of what was coming and we little realized that we were embarked on a fight with the rapids below.

On and on we swept, going faster and faster. The waves leaped higher and higher and great boulders loomed ominously in every direction. Old Ben,



Photo by John P. Holman

Climbing Toward the Sheep Country at the Head of Killey River



## The White Rams of the Kenai 227

that great river man, steered her with a long sweep at the stern and Andy worked at the bow. Any moment we might have hit a boulder that would have thrown us all into the surging flood. It was as thrilling as riding a "bronc" and worse when we hit the "box cañon" for here there was no shore for a mile or more, only perpendicular cliffs, fifty to a hundred feet high.

Once we hit a boulder with a rear-end swipe and it put our Evinrude out of commission and almost upset the whole works, but on we went down through the Cañon, our hearts in our throats and our faith in Ben's strong right arm and steady nerve.

Our faith was well founded for presently we found ourselves stopped in wide and calm waters and knew we had arrived at the head of Skilak Lake. It seemed like the peace following a great storm and we all succumbed to the relaxation of our surroundings and just let our boat drift while we ate a bite of lunch and had a smoke.

Not a breath of air was stirring, and as the day advanced it grew darker; a strange light, coupled with a weird mist overspread the lake, and direction or boundary seemed very remote.

We had yet about ten miles to go across the lake to our base camp, and so, after Ben had persuaded the Evinrude to go again, we headed out on our

## 228 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

course. Soon the mist raised and also a stiff wind which luckily was blowing in our direction. The sea was quite heavy, and the little motor was not going just right, and our progress was mighty slow. I suggested rigging up one of our tents on an oar for a sail. As the wind steadily increased, it helped a lot, and by about four P.M. we made the opposite shore where lay our base camp. Here we left most of our outfit and took just enough to last us three or four days, and next morning we hit it out afoot up the mountain side in the direction of Killey River, on which we were to make our hunting camp. Ben, Andy, Walt and Tom each had about a hundred pounds on their backs, and John and I about fifty with rifles and cameras. There was no trail and in many places the brush was thick and the footing soft, and we all of us got a good sweat going up the steep mountain side. Every ten or fifteen minutes we would sink, to the ground for a "fiver" (five minutes rest) and believe me, we all enjoyed it.

Along about noon, we crowned the top of the mountain and came out on a big, open flat that stretched away to still higher mountains to the west of us. We stopped here awhile and fried up several skillets of bacon and eggs, which tasted wonderfully to us all. Then on again we went, across the tundra.

Soon far off on the high mountains, we saw many

## The White Rams of the Kenai 229

white spots, and putting the glasses on them, knew they were sheep. This gave us a thrill and filled us with hope. When sundown came that night we were all of us about "all in" and sunk down on a grassy knoll caring little but for a bite to eat and a big sleep.

On again early next morning we went, passing through the brakes of Benjamin Creek where we jumped several big moose, their horns still in velvet. Benjamin Creek was quite sizable and about waist deep and running strong. We stopped a while and rigged up a foot-log bridge. We all crossed the main branch all right, but when Walt was crossing the logs on the little branch, it broke, and in a minute he was lying on his back in ice water totally submerged, a hundred pound pack holding him down. Luckily in falling, he had grabbed an unbroken log with his left hand and held on. In a minute we had dashed in and pulled him out hatless and soaked to the skin. But old Walt had long since learned to "take it and smile" and he even refused to build a fire and dry up a bit. Smiling and joking he led the way up to our hunting camp on the Killey.

The next morning John and Ben, Andy and I all left camp together, climbed the steep cliff out of the Killey Creek bottom and on up to the open tundra of the high mountains. When we had climbed for about an hour, we located about a dozen sheep in an



## 230 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

open coulee to the north of us and in the bunch were several good rams. I told John to go and get them, and that Andy and I would pull off towards the south. As we climbed on up the mountain side, we stopped every little while and put the glasses on John and Ben who were now mere specks below us. We saw them circle away until they had the wind in their faces and then gradually crawl up to within gunshot. We saw John rise and shoot and run forward and shoot some more, and then one of the rams fell, and we knew that there was one happy boy in the country anyhow, and also fresh meat in camp.

I thought I had felt some real winds in Montana, but while walking along the sky line of those Alaskan mountains, I was lifted bodily and blown five or ten feet at a time. I had to hand the candle to Alaska. Many and many a time we'd be walking right on the edge of a tremendous precipice—one of those weird, dark Alaskan pot-hole basins—when we heard the wind roaring up towards us and we would literally have to lie prone and hold on to boulders to keep ourselves from being blown over the precipice.

What a soul-stirring, awe-inspiring, sight one beholds on the tops of those great mountains! The great rivers of solid ice reach up the valleys as far as the eye can see. Some of the glaciers were as much as fifteen or twenty miles in width. The dark

## The White Rams of the Kenai 231

pot-hole basins, the weird color of the sky, and sad whine of the winds—how little and how lonely a man feels in the midst of such grandeur!

Ben and John brought in a fine ram's head that night and also a hindquarter of sheep meat (the greatest of all wild meat) and were sure a happy pair. Andy and I had seen quite a lot of sheep and some good rams, but could not get the right chance on any of them. The country was so open, there was no way to make a sneak.

In the middle of the night—on the third night we were camped there—John and I were awakened by Ben saying in a loud whisper and with quite a little concern in his voice: "Get up, boys, there's a big Brownie in camp after our meat." Hurriedly, we all crawled out of our blankets, slipped on pants and shoes, grabbed our rifles and led by Andy (who had, on the spur of the moment, made a tin can candle lantern), we carefully advanced to the meat-cache and found one hindquarter missing. We never saw the bear, only heard him going down through the thickets towards the creek. We were plumb satisfied that we did not see him for an Alaskan Brownie is no animal to go after in the middle of the night with only a tin can lantern for illumination. We crawled back in our blankets, but did not sleep much more that night.

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For several days neither of us were able to get a sight of any good sized rams, but every day we saw all the way from fifty to two hundred sheep. One afternoon, for over a half hour, I watched that king of all North American animals, the Alaskan Brown Bear, feeding on a hillside not a half mile away. The season was not yet open on brown bear, and all I could do was to watch him through my glasses and wonder at his tremendous size and strength. He was actually as large as a full grown Hereford bull and would weigh almost as much. It was sure a tremendous disappointment to have a prize like that within stalking distance, and have to let him go his way unmolested.

Andy was getting a bit peeved that we had not yet killed a ram and that night<sup>1</sup> he said: "Mack, let's take plenty of chuck in the morning and go clear over to the Benjamin Creek Basin and stay over night if we have to. I'm sure we'll see some good rams over in that country."

At sunrise next morning, we were climbing out of the Killey Creek country, headed for that big wild basin lying at the headwaters of Benjamin Creek. It was afternoon before we crowned the divide and were able to look down into the basin beyond. Far away in front of us we spotted a bunch of about twenty-five sheep and among them were some good looking

## The White Rams of the Kenai 233

rams. The chances of stalking them were pretty bad, as we had to go down an open hillside virtually in plain sight of them. We tried it, but before we had gotten anywhere near to them, they had seen us and were off up towards the head of the basin. We first thought that it would be hopeless to follow them, and getting up on a little ridge, we sat down and watched them. They went about three-quarters of a mile and there the bunch split; the ewes going up the mountain side to our left, and the rams continuing on towards the head of the basin. Presently, the rams seemed to disappear and searching carefully with our glasses, we made out what looked to be a box cañon, and figured the rams had drifted up into it—and that if they would just stay in there long enough for us to get up to its rim, we might get one. It was a lucky chance that doesn't come often and it must be played quickly and quietly, and so in a flash we were off for the big stalk.

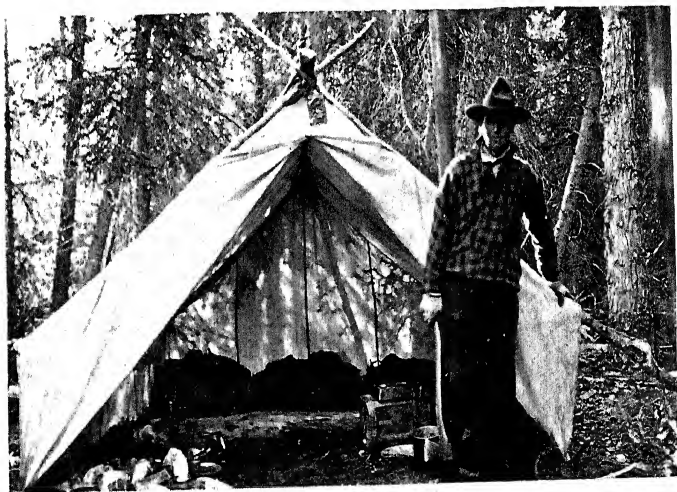
Bent low to the ground, his toes only touching, and going like a scared Indian, Andy led up the mountain side straight for the cañon's rim. When about four hundred yards from the cañon, we lay down and looked the ground over carefully with our glasses, and were stunned and surprised to see a big ram lying down on the far rim of the cañon. One of them had gone up on top to guard, while the

## 234 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

others fed in the bottom below. He was out in plain sight, and so were we. We thought we would surely fail again, for it seemed impossible to get to the rim without the old ram seeing us. But this was our day, and soon we discovered that the warm noonday sunshine had made the old ram a bit dozy, and looking at him closely, decided he was really half asleep. His nose touched the ground and would nod up and down like a man asleep. We figured we had a chance, and watching him closely, we "ooched" on up and up, crawling the last fifty yards flat on our stomachs. I could not see the rams in the cañon, but knew they were there. I decided to shoot across the cañon at the old ram on the opposite rim and then take a chance at the others, as they ran out at the upper end of the cañon. Very carefully, I lined up my thirty-three Winchester on old Mr. Ram and gradually squeezed her off. With a great leap the ram reared up and fell over the edge down into the cañon. Wasting no more thought on him, I ran up along the cañon's rim trying to get up to where the others would come piling out. But I had gone only about fifty yards when Andy shouted, "they're going down below." I whirled around and jumping great leaps at a time, dashed down towards where the rams were coming out and saw three of them loping away towards the lower country. I



We Stop for a Bite of Lunch



Our Camp on the Killey River



## The White Rams of the Kenai 235

pulled down on one of them and in two shots had him down; the others were now five hundred yards away and all I could do was to graze one's hind leg but did not stop him.

The limit the law allowed was three rams and we almost got the three at one stand and the ones I did get were truly beautiful specimens. We skinned out the heads and leaving the meat in a stone cache, we joyfully made our way over the long climb back to the camp on the Killey.

In a day or so more John had filled his limit of three and was through, but I still had one more to come.

One evening John and Ben had seen a couple of good looking rams up on the rim of Killey Creek and in plain sight of camp, and when Andy and I had gotten back to camp after a particularly hard, unsuccessful day, on the highest peaks, they joked us for not being able to see rams when they were right in camp and led us out a few steps in front of our tents and pointed out two fine looking rams calmly feeding not over a half mile away.

It was still dark when we breakfasted next morning and we lost no time in climbing up out of the Killey Cañon and circled way around to where we saw the rams. Climbing up on a high knoll, we lay and watched with our glasses and finally saw seven or



## 236 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

eight sheep, among which were the two rams we had seen the evening before. We were about a mile and a half away from them and the wind was bad, and the clouds were very low and fog settling here and there in the valleys. We started circling down towards them and had gone about half the distance when a great bank of clouds settled right on top of where the sheep were and they were completely shut out from our view, but we decided that while we were temporarily out of luck, still we were benefited for the moment, for we could now advance towards the sheep without any chance whatever of being seen. We went forward until we were sure that we were almost in gunshot of the sheep and then hid in the ledge of a box cañon waiting for the fog to rise so we could see to shoot.

In about a half hour, the sun burned a hole through the blanket of fog and there right in front of us, not a hundred yards away, lay two fine rams. In a minute one of them grew restless and moved off and I decided I must not delay on the other, for it, too, might wind us and beat it away in the fog. Ben had lent me his thirty '06, saying it was the best sheep gun in the outfit and I think he was right for at most any reasonable distance, it would deliver the bullet with wonderful accuracy, and so when I drew a bead on that big old ram lying there in the

## The White Rams of the Kenai 237

mist, I felt sure he was mine, and when the rifle spoke, he was—he never moved out of his tracks.

We were delighted with the head; the horns were fully as good as the two others and that was saying a whole lot. We soon had our prize back in camp, and there was general rejoicing all around, for it meant that our hunt had had a hundred per cent result—each of us had gotten the limit of three fine white rams.

It was getting on towards October first, and we had to hurry out to catch the last steamer going up to Anchorage, at the head of Cook Inlet, where we were to outfit for our trip to the Kahiltna River country, where our placer ground lay. In a couple of days we were back at our base camp on the shore of Skilak Lake, and next day, started on our back trail across the lake and up the river.

After four days of pulling against a fast current, we hit still water again and knew we were nearing the mouth of Kenai Lake. Ben got the Evinrude going and we looked forward to a nice peaceful ride up the lake to Andy's cabin. But our troubles were not over. They had just started, for soon the Evinrude refused to sputter, and a high wind rose, and we were only a couple of miles on our journey across a twenty-five mile lake. I did not like the looks or the feel of the weather. An ominous spirit of storm

## 238 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

brooded over nature and I told the boys we had better all man the oars and not wait on the motor, and make for Pine Island about seven miles up the lake, and if the Evinrude did not work by then, we would camp there for the night. So John and Tom, Andy, Walt and I rowed hard, while patient old Ben took down and put together the Evinrude I guess a dozen times, and *still* she balked! All the time, the clouds grew darker and the wind blew harder, and the sea was a mass of white caps.

When we got to within a mile of Pine Island, it had developed into a gale and the waves were leaping four feet in the air and many of them coming aboard. It took every bit of strength that all of us could give to fight our way through wind and wave to the lee shore of the Island, and if we had not promptly started to row the minute the Evinrude quit going, I don't know just what would have happened to us. We all felt we were very lucky to be on shore.

We put in a rather restless night. The wind all but blew our tents down and the place was infested with porcupines. All night long we could hear them chewing on things lying about the camp and next morning most of John's clothing had great holes gnawed in them, including the seat of his pants.

Up at daylight, a bite of breakfast and we were out in the waves again. We kept over near the

## The White Rams of the Kenai 239

south shore, but made slow progress, and by noon had only made about three miles of the remaining fourteen. Now, added to the terrific wind and high seas, rain had come and the clouds hung low and thick and dark. We were about despairing of making Andy's cabin by night and were figuring on another night out in the storm when, far off up the lake, we saw a black spot moving in our direction. Soon we heard the "put-put" of a motor, and in about fifteen minutes Fred Bunce's launch was alongside. He said he thought it was about time for us to be showing up, and he had come down the lake in the hope of meeting us and helping us up through the storm. It was mighty white of him to come out in that storm with only a chance that he might find us, but such is the way of those big-hearted fellows who live on the world's frontier. He took us in tow and in an hour more, cold, wet and hungry, we all piled into Andy's cabin near Roosevelt.

We lit up the stove, fried meat, and made coffee—while the storm increased in force and the rain came down in torrents.

After supper Walt went up to the railroad and found out there would be a construction train starting for Seward at one A.M. We were several days overdue by this time and decided to go on into Seward that night. So along about ten P.M. we all

## 240 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

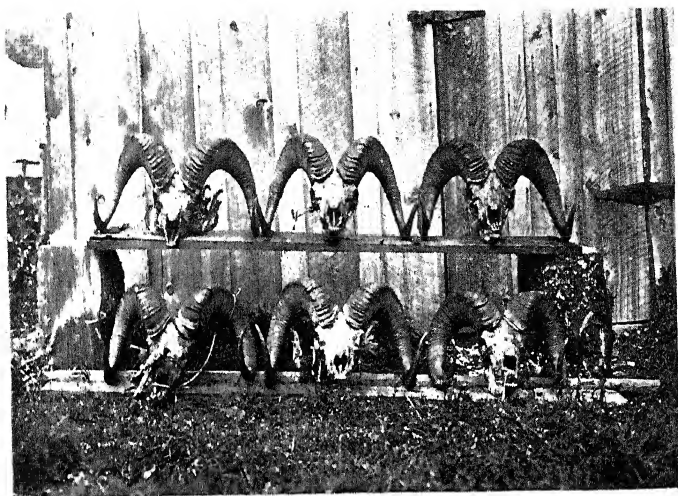
shouldered packs, and, led by Andy with a flashlight, we made it out to the railroad and took possession of an old bunkhouse used by previous construction crews.

The night was bitterly raw and the rain still pelted down, but we lit up a fire in the big boiler stove and lay about on the floor on our blankets, telling stories, singing, and listening for the whistle of the train to take us back to Seward.

Finally, about one-thirty P.M., she rolled in. The conductor spotted a box car opposite the door of our shack and we tumbled ourselves and all our plunder in and in two minutes were on our way to Seward and civilization.

But we reckoned hastily—nature had ruled otherwise—for up on the mountain sides great glaciers had opened up and were pouring great rivers of icy water down to the valleys below. Immense trees and boulders were uprooted and came rolling thunderously down towards the railroad pile bridges. In but a few minutes of swelling waters, bridge, railroad track and all were swept away toward the lake beyond.

Our train ran ahead but about two miles, when our engine stopped in two feet of water, just near a bridge that in ten minutes more was swept down like a bunch of toothpicks. We got out in the blinding storm, saw the logs jammed up against the bridge, saw the dirty yellow water rising higher and



We Each Got the Limit and All Good Ones



MacDougal, Alaska, Our Placer Mining Ease



## The White Rams of the Kenai 241

higher, knew that the bridge's life was but for a few minutes and decided we had all better go back to Andy's cabin, where we had left quite some grub. We left our game heads in the box car and just took our blankets, and hiked back up the track. The train didn't get to Seward for over a month.

We did not know just what to do then. It was impossible to walk to Seward by way of the railroad track for only half the track was now in existence, practically every bridge had been washed away or put out of commission, and more than a dozen mountain streams, swollen into torrential waters, blocked our way. We thought that each day the storm would stop and the waters go down, but old Dame Nature was on a wild rampage and she hadn't "started good" yet.

It had now been raining six solid days and nights. The twenty-five mile lake was now out of its bounds and several cabins on nearby banks had toppled over and were tumbling about in the yellow sea. Things were getting "black and serious." The water was now creeping up foot by foot towards our cabin which stood a hundred yards back from the lake shore. We dared not go to the mountain sides for with crashing trees and great boulders rolling down every minute, a man would have been in deadly peril. We could not follow the railroad for it was



## 242 Cow Range and Hunting Trail

a thing of the past. Out in front of us was a mighty dangerous looking yellow sea, with great logs and uprooted trees rising and falling like spectres from some dark abyss. And yet across the lake lay safety, for there was a range of low lying hills, with no glaciers, no falling trees or crashing boulders and by following these, we could probably make Seward in a full day's travel.

At supper time on the seventh day water was just outside of the door of our cabin. The lake was still rising. Rain still came in torrents. We had a council of war. We knew that if it kept on raining all that night, the cabin would be inundated by morning and we would be forced to leave it. We had Andy's big eighteen foot canoe, with an out-board motor in it fastened to the handle of the cabin door. We decided that when water actually came into the cabin, we would all get in the canoe and take our only chance, cross the lake to the low ridge and safety. It was taking a big chance, all of us in an eighteen foot canoe in that whirling yellow sea with trees floating everywhere, but it was our one best bet—we had to move somewhere.

About three o'clock next morning the boys sleeping on the floor were awakened by water coming into their blankets and in a second we were all awake and knew that we must cross the lake. The canoe lay

## The White Rams of the Kenai 243

rocking up and down at the doorstep. By the time we had breakfast cooked and eaten, the water was knee deep in the cabin. It was surely a weird and dismal picture, the howling wind, the abysmal darkness, the yellow waves lapping up on the legs of the stove, and the boys all standing up in the water eating their bite of breakfast.

We did not wait to wash our dishes, the rising water would do that, but stepping into the canoe, with Andy at the stern to run the motor and old Ben as bow man, and several of us with pōles and paddles, like spectres of the night, we glided out among the hemlocks. Dawn was just starting, and by its light we could just distinguish great yellow masses heaving up and down. Hundreds of logs and trees were tossing and rolling and pounding ahead of us, and into this maelstrom we headed, hoping by the grace of God and "frontier courage" to get through seven miles of it. And we did. A dozen times it looked as if we would be swamped or crushed by some great floundering tree, and then old Andy, by a skillful twist of the motor, or Ben by a knowing thrust of a paddle, would get us by.

We then silently shouldered our packs, and in the still drenching rain slowly made our way towards Seward and civilization.











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